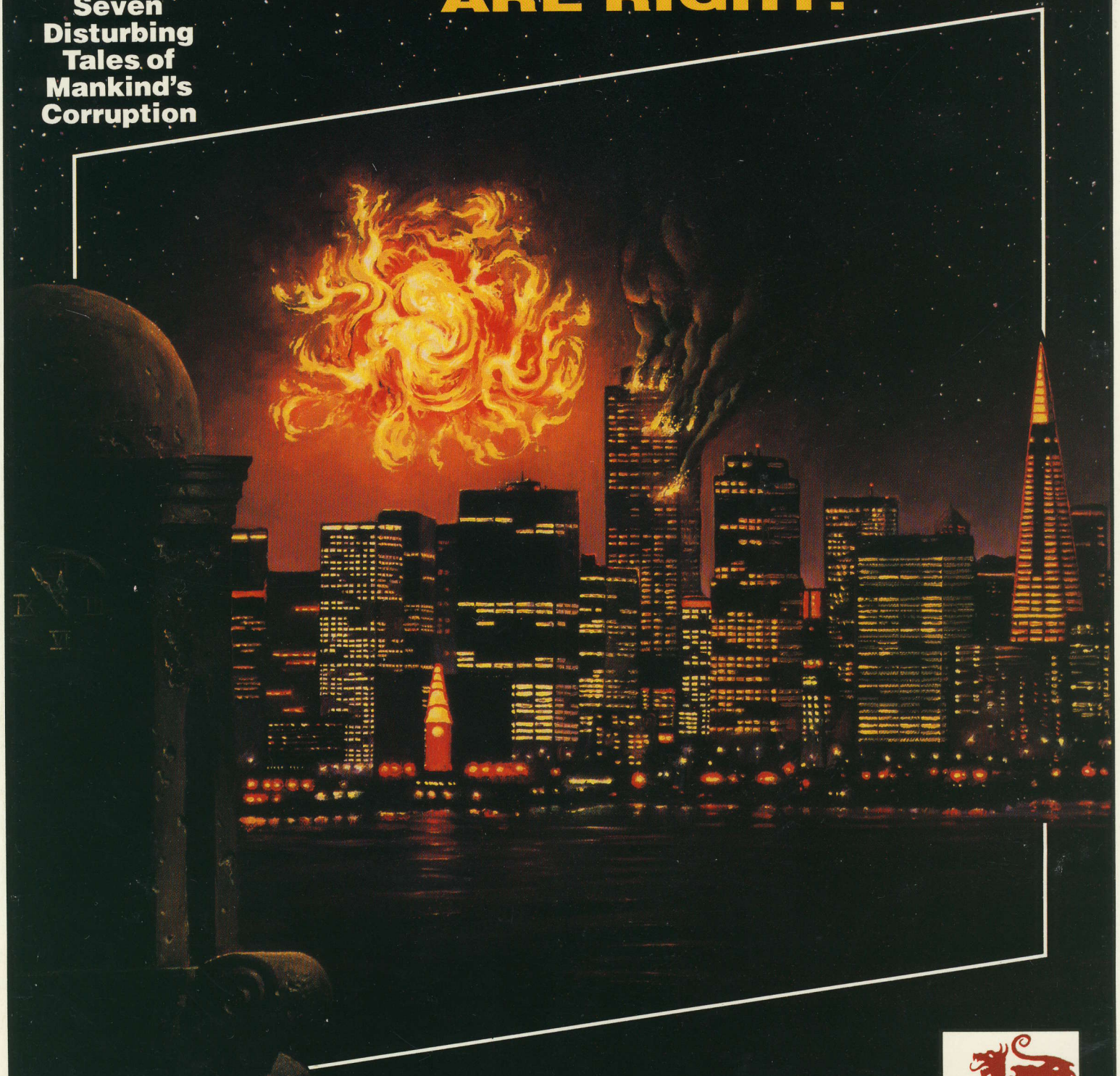
FOR Call of Cthulhu 1990s

2337

THE STARS ARE RIGHT!

Seven Disturbing Tales of Mankind's Corruption



Bishop, Behrendt, Frew, Hatherley, Ross, Rasmussen, Sumpter, Tynes, Watts, Snyder, Pino, Reynolds, Santo

CHAOSIUM®

The Stars Are Right

Seven Modern Horrors

H. P. LOVECRAFT 1890 – 1937

THE STARS ARE RIGHT!

Seven Modern Horrors

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Introduction

"That is not dead which can eternal lie,
And with strange aeons even death may die."

The Necronomicon

THE second millennium draws to a close as the hoary stars track their ancient courses. Soon the time will be right, a time foretold in many a forgotten book, a time when mankind perceives its end and the world erupts in chaos and flame, the Old Ones singing and dancing, reveling as they did before, extinguishing mankind as though no more than the flame of a candle. In the early part of this century discoveries were made that warned of the coming changes. As this century draws to a close, the warnings come true as first one, then another prophecy is fulfilled. The dawn of a new age is upon us, the stars are right!

The Stars Are Right! contains seven different *Call of Cthulhu* adventures, all set in the modern era. Although most have been specifically located somewhere in the United States, a little keeper ingenuity easily converts most of them for use in other locations, either in America, Europe, or some other place of the keeper's choice.

"Love's Lonely Children" begins with the brutal murder of a teenage prostitute. Following up the story, investigators encounter a rock band, the perverted owners of an adult bookstore, and finally the Great Old One Y'golonac.

"Nemo Solus Sapit (None is Wise Alone)" involves the investigators in the schemes of an insane California psychiatrist. Looking into a fellow investigator's insanity and treatment at the facility, they discover the doctor's unorthodox treatment methods include both sorcery and cannibalism.

"This Fire Shall Kill" begins with the destruction of the investigators' home. Following up, the investigators learn of an ancient fire cult and are witness to several fiery deaths before a final confrontation with cultist firemen takes place atop a burning skyscraper in downtown San Francisco.

"The Professionals" introduces investigators to the subterfuge of the national political arena. Hired by shadowy figures to besmirch the reputation of a popular U.S. Senator, the investigators soon find themselves hopelessly entangled in a web of intrigue, counterplot, and death.

"Fractal Gods" leads investigators into the dark complexities of a computerized horror. Following the mysterious suicide of a computer graphics enthusiast, investigators confront bizarre alien entities and ultimately encounter the fractal form of the Outer God Yog-Sothoth.

"The Gates of Delirium" takes investigators to New York City where a devious psychiatrist is using his patients to test a mysterious drug called Liao. Visions of other worlds brings about a deadly encounter with Daoloth.

"The Music of the Spheres" takes place at the site of a radio telescope in rural Nebraska. Strange signals from a distant, dark star stir long-hidden emotions, panic wildlife, and eventually create havoc in the small town of Hayden. This extra-terrestrial entity, Ghroth, signals the coming of the new age and the end of mankind.

"When the Stars Came Right Again" is an astrological treatise charting the positions of the planets at the time of R'lyeh's rising in 1925.

—K.H.

Call Of Cthulhu 5th Edition

The Stars Are Right has been prepared using the skills list from the 5th edition of Call of Cthulhu, which differs slightly from previous editions.

New Skills	*Old Skills*
Art	Sing
Biology	Botany, Zoology
Conceal	Camouflage
Locksmith	Pick Pocket
Martial Arts	*new*
Medicine	Diagnose Disease, Treat Disease, Treat Poison
Natural History	Botany, Zoology
Navigate	Make Maps
Other Language	R/W Language
Own Language	R/W English
Persuade	Debate, Oratory
Physics	*new*

Love's Lonely Children

"For those who read of evil and search for its form within their minds call forth evil, and so may Y'golonac return to walk among men..."

The Revelations of Glaaki, Volume XII

THIS scenario takes place in a large city. Unnamed, the exact city is left to the discretion of the keeper, the best choice probably the home town of the investigators.

Keeper's Information

The line that separates petty human evil from ravening horror is easily crossed. Colin Hammond, a pornographer, is a case in point. Weak and greedy, encouraged in degeneracy by his gargantuan, domineering wife, Hammond long ago exhausted the range of pleasures open to saner members of humanity. A resourceful man, he sought further afield for the delights he craved, employing in turn drugs, sadism, Satanism and worse.

The proprietor of a bookshop specializing in pornography gave Hammond a wide range of shadowy and specialist contacts. Through one of these he obtained a photocopy of the ill-rumored twelfth volume of The Revelations Of Glaaki. Long hours he spent pawing over the book with sweaty hands, a feverish study that continued on into the early hours of the morning. After some months he unravelled the secrets of the text. Not so much a book, the writings were more truly a gateway to forbidden pleasures.

Hammond now has that for which he hungered—new sensation. His flesh hosts a dreaming alien consciousness. Hammond is possessed by the Great Old One Y'golonac.

Investigators' Information

The scenario begins with the gruesome death of a young prostitute, Kathy Hammond, the only child of Colin and Edith Hammond. Fleeing the horror and abuse of her home, Kathy escaped one hell only to find herself in another—the living hell of heroin addiction. Forced into prostitution to support her drug habit, Kathy was gone from home nearly eight months before her father managed to track her down. No stranger to the city's flourishing illegal nightlife, Colin Hammond secretly followed her to Caulfield Park, Kathy's regular working site.

The next morning Kathy Hammond's hacked and mutilated body is found stuffed into a half-dozen garbage cans lining the perimeter of the lake. The Lonely Children Papers #1 below is a newspaper story that appears later that day. The keeper may prefer to present this information in the form of a television news story seen by the investigators. The story is complete with on-the-scene interviews and moody shots of Caulfield Park at dawn. Some keepers might prefer to have the investigators stumble upon the horrible evidence themselves, directly involving them in the case. With Caulfield Park wreathed in fog and shadows, the discovery of the brutally dispatched corpse costs investigators 1/1D4 Sanity points.

WOMAN BRUTALLY MURDERED BY DERANGED KILLER

Dismembered Body Found in Caulfield Park

CAULFIELD PARK—The body of Katherine Louise Hammond, a seventeen year old prostitute of no fixed address, was discovered early this morning in downtown Caulfield Park by city workers. Pieces of the body wrapped in black plastic bags were found in several garbage cans along the edge of the park's ornamental lake.

Police spokesperson Detective Sergeant Margaret O'Halloran said that the corpse had been crudely dismembered with a heavy instrument, possibly an axe. The body was also marked by numerous savage bite wounds. These wounds, although definitely human, indicate a possible jaw or facial deformity of distinctive appearance.

Early examination shows that the cause of death was due to loss of blood, and shock. Although final tests are yet to be made, a preliminary check showed a large amount of heroin in the victim's bloodstream. Hammond is believed to have died sometime between the hours of 11 PM last night and 1 AM this morning.

Hammond's boyfriend David "Spider" Holloway, a musician with a popular underground band called The Rising is currently assisting police with their enquiries.

The Lonely Children Papers #1

Further Developments

By late afternoon, Spider Holloway is released from custody. The evening news updates the story, announcing that although no charges have been filed, the young man is still considered a suspect. Television news shows a thin young man dressed in tattered black hurrying down the steps of a police station to a waiting, decrepit car. He holds his coat up, covering his face but not his red mohawk haircut.

It is also revealed that Kathy Hammond had a criminal record with convictions for soliciting, for prostitution, and for possession of heroin.

Caulfield Park

SEVERAL acres of green squeezed in at the edge of the city's financial district, by day Caulfield Park is pleasant and relaxing. Partially overshadowed by towering office blocks of glass and steel, its rolling lawns are spotted by sunlight, its tree-lined avenues and ornamental lake a haven for nearby office workers who descend upon the park during lunch hour to stroll, eat their sandwiches, and feed the ducks. None of the be-suited and power-dressed business people who frequent it by day come to the park after dark.

Investigations by Day

Inquiries among the office workers brings no information. Almost all have heard of the murder but none are familiar with the character of the park after dark. To them Kathy Hammond is just another statistic. If evidence of the park's nightlife is looked for, discarded condoms and syringes are uncovered in the flower beds and garbage cans.

The Gardener

Investigators who paw through trash cans or tread on the flower beds in search of clues draw the attentions of overall-clad Harold Lambert, a city gardener. A grizzled man in his late fifties, Harold's weathered face is a map of wrinkles and broken capillaries, his angry, bloodshot eyes half hidden by a thick mop of dirty grey hair. A bitter alcoholic, most people stand well back when talking with Harold; his breath is beyond excuse. Investigators who tread on the carefully tended flower beds earn themselves the sharp edge of his tongue.

Harold Lambert

Patrick, Harold's only son, died of a heroin overdose twenty years ago and the old man has never recovered from the shock. He blames the people who sold his son the drugs and has come to hate all drug dealers with a passion. If he had his way, he would happily tie up any dealer he could find, inject them with "their own filthy dope an' watch 'em die."

Harold is confronted everyday with evidence of what goes on in Caulfield Park. As he cleans up the previous night's sordid remnants—wearing rubber gloves—Harold is only too happy to complain about what goes on after dark. As he has no one to talk to most of the time, he unburdens all his sorrows and rage in a rapid-fire tirade upon the first person who seems even vaguely sympathetic.

Nightlife

Once the sun sets, Caulfield Park takes on a new guise. The trees which seemed pleasantly leafy by day block out much of the glow from the streetlights, while the lapping of the lake takes on a sucking, menacing sound. In autumn and winter the trees are skeletal, the fog hanging wraith-like between their hoary trunks. Cars prowl the edges of the park, their taillights glowing in the darkness.

Hidden by shadows, drug dealers and prostitutes carry out their illicit transactions catering to society's baser needs. Violence is common; youthful gangs fight murderously over imagined dishonors while cheated clients argue for the return of their money. Wrapped in newspapers and huddled in cardboard boxes for warmth, homeless people settle down amidst the shrubbery. At night, Caulfield Park becomes their home.

Investigators who come to Caulfield Park after dark find that the action does not heat up until well after 10 PM. Thereafter over-dressed prostitutes and feral youths in gang colors drift about beneath the trees and occasional street lights. Both good times and trouble await those who visit Caulfield Park.

Having already answered the police's none too gentle inquiries, most of the park's evening inhabitants respond to questions about the Kathy Hammond murder with either sullen silence or threats. If investigators succeed with Persuade rolls—or offer a $20 bill—someone points them in the direction of Honeysuckle Rose, a working girl and a friend of Kathy's.

Honeysuckle Rose

A slim woman in her late thirties, after dark and with judicious makeup, Rose looks about twenty. Rose dresses in tight jeans, high heels and loose blouses. Adept at casual, meaningless conversation, Rose grows sharp and tense when questions become more personal. Her hard life has taught her to look out for number one and she does her best to keep her working life separate from her personal life. If the investigators wish to talk with her they must pay at least $40. Time is money. If male investigators pay a little more, Rose offers to show "why they call me Suckle, honey."

Honeysuckle Rose

As far as Rose could ascertain (for Kathy was secretive about her past) the girl had a desperately unhappy childhood. She said she had run away from home five years ago, but Rose thinks this was a lie; Kathy seemed to know little about life on the street. Rose suspects that she had only recently run away from home when she first showed up at the park about six months ago.

Rose has met Spider Holloway, "that punk boy," once or twice. She says the two seemed very much a couple, inseparable from one another. Rose dislikes Spider and does not bother to hide the fact, mistakenly believing him to be the one who introduced Kathy to heroin.

On the night of Kathy's death, Rose last saw her talking angrily with a thin weasel-like man around 10:30 PM. She saw the same man, driving "a green car, a sedan" much later in the night, around 2 AM. Not seeing Kathy for most of the evening did not disturb Rose as the girl had earlier mentioned that she was planning to leave to see Spider and the band play.

Rose has reported none of this to the police; she says she does not need the harassment such action would bring. If any of the investigators are police or reporters, or claim to be, Rose clams up. Neither money nor smooth-tongued investigators can encourage Rose to speak openly if she believes publicity will result. Like most of the after-dark inhabitants of Caulfield Park, Rose does not want her refuge disturbed more than it has been already.

Although she does not volunteer the information, Honeysuckle Rose knows the address of Kathy's home, a rundown squat. Investigators who ask her about its whereabouts, and offer at least another $20, will be directed to a neighborhood a few blocks west of the park.

Rose already knows the identity of Kathy's killer, or at least has a fair idea. Having met Colin Hammond once or twice in years past, she easily recognized him as the driver of the green sedan she saw on the night of the murder. Once Rose learns the investigators are interested in Kathy Hammond, and more importantly in her killer, she visits Colin and alerts him to the fact. Rose intends to blackmail Hammond and at no time does she hint to the investigators that she knows the identity of Kathy's killer.

If the investigators stake out Hammond's bookshop later in the course of the scenario, it is entirely possible that they are witness to Rose's visit, and possibly her death.

The Police

ANY inquiries about Kathy Hammond's murder are passed on to the officer in charge of the case, Detective Sergeant Ted MacIntyre. Rarely in his office, McIntyre rarely returns messages left for him. Investigators may have difficulty catching up with him.

Detective Sergeant Ted MacIntyre

Once a weight lifter and fitness fanatic, middle-age combined with an excessive alcohol intake have rendered his solid build a bit flabby. MacIntyre's graying hair is shaved short and his nose, broken several times over the years, is badly set. His size is enough to make any attacker think twice before tackling him.

Investigators who interview McIntyre find him narrow-minded and abrasive. He has little time to follow up on the murder of a worthless junkie prostitute. In MacIntyre's narrow mind the obvious suspect for Kathy's murder is her punk boyfriend, Spider Holloway, a known drug offender with prior offenses.

Little the investigators say or do changes his mind. To McIntyre's way of thinking people fall into one of two distinct categories—those who are right, and those who are wrong. He can usually tell one from another simply by the clothes they wear or how they cut their hair.

The Rising

QUITE possibly the investigators also suspect Kathy's punk boyfriend. Avenues of obtaining information about The Rising, and what that information is, are outlined below.

General Information

A successful Idea roll allows an investigator to recall having read or heard something about The Rising. An aggressive punk band, their energy on stage has been called "phenomenal and exhilarating." The Rising have gathered a substantial local following and take a strong public stance against racism, sexism and homophobia.

Music Stores

Investigators spending time in music stores are able to track down the band's three singles and one EP. The music is typified by a fast aggressive style, drums pounding industrially, the bass a dark rhythm under two guitars shrieking, the vocals wailing, biting, sounding out above all. Political and social themes are common to The Rising's lyrics.

The Rising's releases are all on one label, Melted Mirror Records, an independent studio specializing in underground bands. See The Lonely Children Papers #2.

Newspapers

No mainstream daily contains any mention of The Rising. A study of the local rock press coupled with Library Use rolls uncovers several brief but glowing articles in the

The Rising's Recording Catalogue

Singles

"Kill The Law" c/w "Meat"

"Go Home Homophobe" c/w "Shoot It (If It Thinks)"

"Disbelieve, Disobey, Destroy" c/w "Capitali$tic Xma$ Orgy"

EPs

Sweet Anarchy, featuring "Thinking Ain't Illegal," "Don't Believe," "Lost And Lonely," "Cannibalistic Consumer Culture," and "Sweet Anarchy."

The Lonely Children Papers #2

form of interviews and reviews. All praise the band for their raw contemporary sound.

Beat magazine applauds The Rising for their "stripped-back vitality, harking back to the explosion of punk in the late 70s." *Nu-Music X-Press* favorably compares them to The Sex Pistols, The Dead Kennedys and Black Flag. Almost all the reviews are positive, except for one crushing review of the EP in a more mainstream, pop-oriented weekly magazine.

Live Gigs

Any investigation into The Rising reveals the band plays regularly around town at various independent venues. Flyers advertising their gigs are glued to telephone poles and corner traffic lights, as well as bulletin boards in most of the music stores. The flyers show the date and location of their upcoming appearance. This information can also be found in independent rock press magazines which regularly feature gig guides advertising band appearances. The band's next appearance is over the next four nights at a club called The Pit, a hotel in a bleak part of the inner city. The opening act is a band called Nutcracker Suite. The Rising is scheduled to perform around 11:30 PM.

The Pit

DESPITE its name the place is not too hellish, although investigators more used to nights at the opera may be taken aback by the style of The Pit and its clientele. The hotel in which The Pit is found is called The Grand, a shabby structure that backs onto a busy set of elevated train tracks. The Pit itself is the largish back room featuring alternative bands Wednesday through Sunday nights.

From outside, the hotel is a dreary, seedy-looking building of red brick. Torn, outdated posters advertising past gigs flap in the wind while trains rattle by late into the night.

The interior decor of The Pit is best described as "designer grunge." Walls are painted a deep red and scrawled with graffiti, the stained and threadbare carpets pockmarked with cigarette burns. Lighting is subdued, mainly reflected from the spotlights focussed on the stage. The stage itself is fenced off with wire mesh and flanked by huge speakers.

The Pit's customers are a motley collection of subcultures, stereotypes, herd-beasts and individuals. Punks, skinheads and goths are seen, as are occasional slumming fashion victims. Some people do not attract a single glance—ordinary people who like good music. Others accumulate stares wherever they go. During the day, The Pit is closed, people gathering instead at the front bar, with bikers, and bands and their followers making up most of the Grand's regular clientele. Once a month the local tattoo club meets here to compare and talk about their latest decorations.

Meeting The Rising

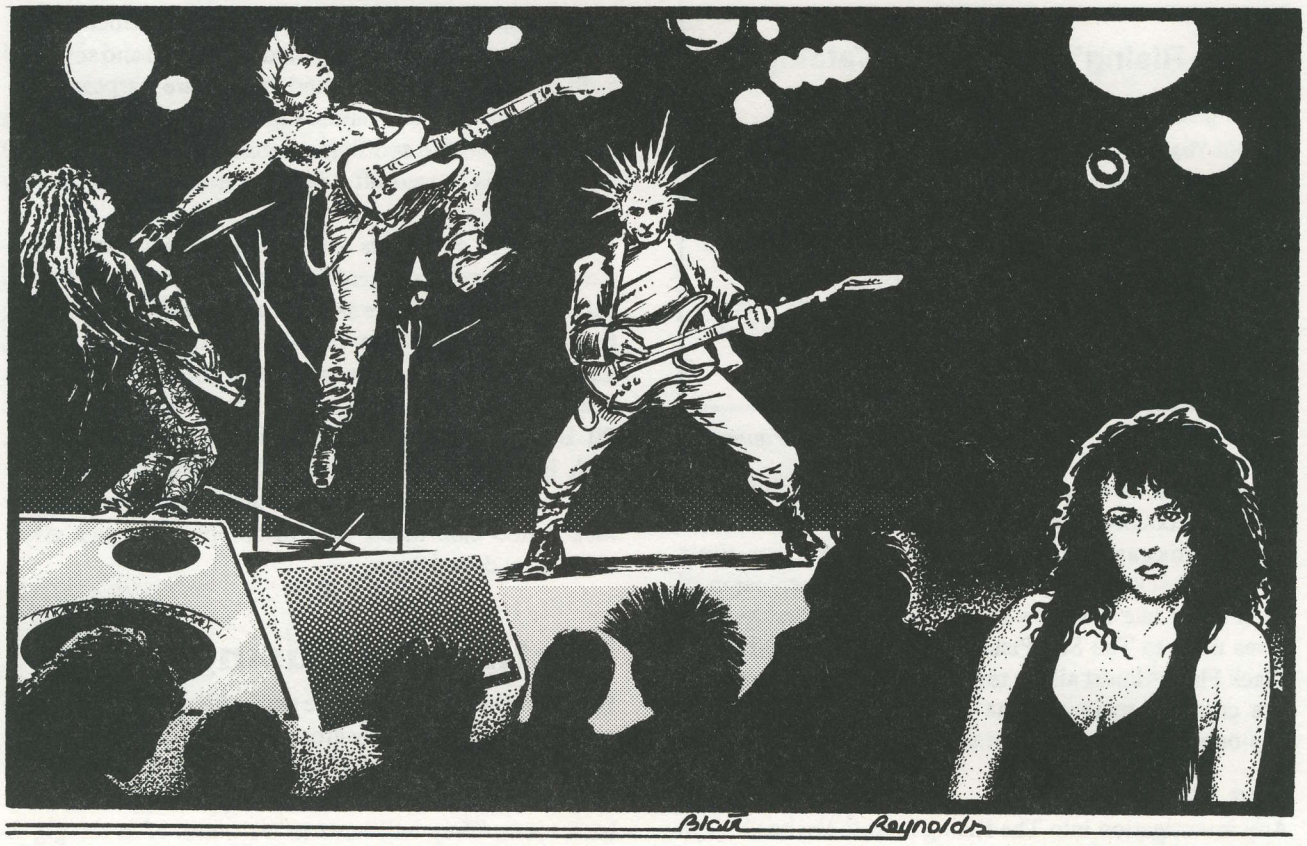
Bands working The Pit arrive several hours early to set up and sound check, usually around 7 PM. If the investigators do not visit until after the bands have set up and the club started to fill, they find The Rising is sequestered in a back room. They will have to wait until after the gig to

Graeme "The Fix" Norbert

Investigators hanging around The Pit have the opportunity to speak to a variety of people—some interesting, some not. One of the less pleasant of the venue's regular patrons is drug pusher Graeme Norbert.

With his slicked-back hair, gold tooth, and ready smile this known drug dealer seems pleasant enough, but a Psychology roll reveals his charm is entirely superficial. Well-dressed and sleek, Graham oozes through the crowd, offering "special deals" to anyone he thinks a likely buyer. Although Norbert sells almost any drug, he specializes in heroin. Keepers might have him push away a desperate but destitute junkie in favor of someone who appears more flush, perhaps one of the investigators themselves. When asked the prices of his various drugs, The Fix usually replies: "How much have you got?"

Graeme Norbert



The Rising rocks The Pit

speak with them. If they come early, they may get a chance to meet the band before they play.

Karl the drummer is the shortest of the four, and allows no one but himself to touch his drum kit. Blonde and spiked Baz, the guitarist, avoids doing as much work as he can. Jamaican-born Dave busies himself carrying guitar cases and grows jealous if strangers talk to Baz, his lover, for more than a few minutes. Spider, the lead singer, is withdrawn, almost oblivious to the world around him. He spends his time staring blankly into space. Chemistry and First Aid rolls can tell investigators that he is not on drugs while Psychology rolls suggest shock is responsible for Spider's withdrawn behavior.

Investigators who help carry instruments into the club from the car earn the band's gratitude. Keepers may wish to call for STR and DEX rolls when bulky objects are being lifted. Besides being rewarded with a free beer when the work is done, investigators helping the band may add 20 percentiles to any communication rolls they attempt with members of The Rising. If interviews are conducted before the show see below, *The Boys in the Band.*

The Opening Act

Nutcracker Suite is the first act up, a band of three lesbian communist skinheads. They come out at 10:30 PM and between shockingly harsh bursts of feedback, verbally abuse the cheering crowd. There is no drummer, instead a percussionist grinds electric drills against microphones and clangs a sheet of corrugated metal to obtain a beat. Investigators will be required to make Listen rolls to hear anything above the harsh screeches of the band. When Nutcracker Suite begins, a crowd is already drifting in. By the time they finish, The Pit is a madhouse.

The Main Act

At 11:50 The Rising make their way onto the stage, accompanied by a wail of feedback. The sound is rapidly amplified and distorted, soon accompanied by the introductory notes of the bass guitar, loud enough to resonate a listener's body. The pounding of the drums begins next, then the shivering notes of the lead guitar. The beat grows faster, the crowd before the stage begins to sway, fists flailing in the air while heads nod in time to the thundering beat. As the shrieked and desperate vocals begin, the crowd goes wild. 200 people slam dance in front of the stage, hurling and bouncing their bodies about in the crush.

By this time The Pit is jam packed. Investigators need to make STR x5 rolls to force their way between people and DEX x5 rolls to avoid slipping in spilled beer. Anyone taking refuge in the toilets finds emaciated drug-users shooting up in the cubicles and drunken teenagers vomiting into sinks.

The Boys In The Band

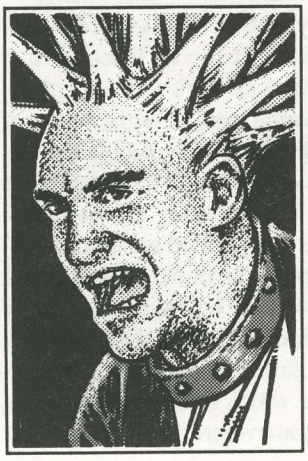
If the investigators have a chance to speak to The Rising before they play, it is likely while they are setting up

equipment. An interview after the gig is held either at the front bar or in the backstage band-room with the four exhausted and sweaty musicians passing around a bottle of cheap red wine and joints.

Karl McIvor

Karl McIvor, 23, Drums

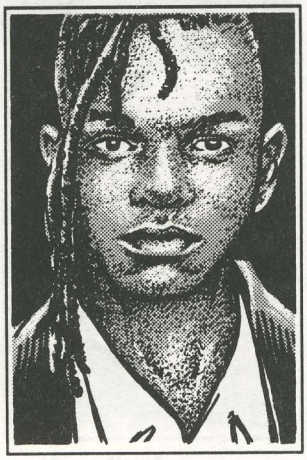
His head shaved except for a single lock of green-dyed hair, Karl sports a pierced nose and heavily pierced left ear. A light chain connects the two. He wears Doc Marten's boots, tattered leather trousers held together with safety pins, a leather waistcoat, and no shirt. Karl is full of aggressive energy, laughing, shouting and making sweeping gestures. He is somewhat overexcitable, and when tired (as he is after a gig), quick-tempered and irritable.



Baz Elliot

Barry "Baz" Elliot, 19, Lead Guitar

Perhaps the most conservatively attired member of the band, Baz dresses in torn jeans and t-shirt, a black leather jacket adorned with studs, and the ubiquitous Doc Marten's. His bleached blonde hair is spiked, echoing the studded leather dog-collar padlocked around his neck. (The key is carried by Dave, his lover.) Baz is the quiet type, often teased by the others for never smiling on stage. When he has something to say it is rarely trivial, and the other members of the band have learned to listen to his infrequent but insightful suggestions. Conversely, if ignored, Baz sulks. He is the baby of the group, and somewhat spoiled.



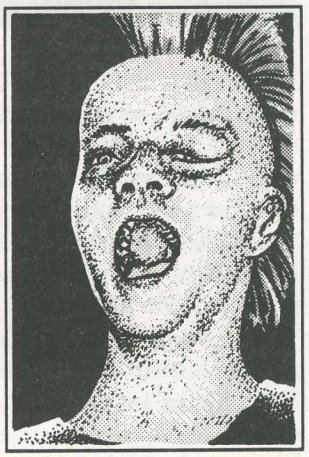
Dave Johnson

Dave Johnson, 20, Bass Guitar

Dave's parents are from Jamaica, and he wears his hair in long dreadlocks, although shaved at the sides. He wears steel-capped Doc Marten's boots, multi-strapped and zippered bondage trousers, a torn red t-shirt, and a ragged pair of formal coat tails adorned with badges, chains and hand-painted slogans. He is the lover of Baz, and quick to defend him should the need arise. Intense and obsessive, Dave is the member of the band most often in trouble with the police.

David "Spider" Holloway, 21, Vocals and rhythm guitar

Gaining his nickname from the black-widow spider tattooed on his left bicep, Spider sports a flaming red mohawk as well as two black eyes and several bruises administered during the recent police "questioning." Dressed head to toe in tattered black, relieved only by the silver of his earrings and studded belt, Spider is an impressive sight, an effect added to by his height.



Spider Holloway

Still in a state of shock over Kathy's death, Spider's attention wanders, and he is somewhat withdrawn. The other band members are well aware of this, and do their best to shield him from upsetting questions. Ordinarily a non-violent person, Spider is plotting unspeakably violent ways of killing Kathy's murderer should he ever discover his or her identity. Only when on stage does Spider come to life. Offstage he concentrates on getting drunk.

Spider is egotistical, and somewhat selfish, a thin facade that hides a person really quite insecure and constantly seeking reassurance. Because he writes most of The Rising's songs, Spider has come to think of himself as the most important person in the band.

Kathy and Spider had argued on the day before her death, parting on bad terms. They had been debating whether or not to be tested for HIV/AIDS. He thought they should, she didn't. Kathy's usual way of dealing with problems was to ignore them. Spider now blames himself for Kathy's death; if they had not fought, he thinks, she would not have been working the night of her death, and so would never have encountered her murderer. A Psychology roll recognizes Spider's guilt; a Psychoanalysis roll can help alleviate some of it.

The Facts of Kathy Hammond

Having already received more than their share of police harassment, the band is loath to talk to strangers about her. Persuade rolls must be made before Karl, Baz or Dave feel comfortable talking with the investigators, modified if they helped the band before the show.

Shock Troops

Investigators who befriend The Rising may wish to have the punks back them up as moral and martial support if a confrontation with the Hammonds occurs; keepers will have to engineer the specifics of this episode. Most likely the group gathers at Spider's apartment, perhaps sharing some alcohol or amphetamines to bolster their courage.

Karl masks his nervousness with high spirits; Baz is calm and quiet, and perhaps surprisingly efficient in an emergency; Dave the most brutal, swinging a heavy wrench with deadly efficiency; and Spider the most berserk.

Investigators are told that Spider and Kathy were very much in love, so much so that she was attempting to give up her heroin addiction for him. According to the band she had not used the drug for a week. Clearly this contradicts the police forensic report of Kathy's death, which has established that her body showed evidence of heroin use in the hours preceding her death. The Rising can offer no explanation for this.

According to the newspaper report, Kathy had no fixed abode but if they think it will help catch Kathy's killer, Spider and the band give the investigators the address of the squat where she lived.

Everyone in the band knows that Kathy had run away from home. None of them know why, and none of them really care. None of The Rising have ever met Kathy's parents.

Spider's Apartment

At the end of the night the four band members make their way home. After the equipment is loaded into the car, Spider remains at The Pit for a few more drinks while the other three drive off. After purchasing a bottle of port, Spider staggers away into the night toward his one room apartment nearby. Investigators who have alleviated some of Spider's guilt are welcomed as possible drinking companions, or just as company on the road home.

The entrance to his apartment is up three flights of rickety fire-escape stairs at the rear of the building. His solitary window provides a view over a gray sea of rooftops.

In Spider's apartment investigators making a Spot Hidden roll notice an issue of *Naughty Schoolgirls* magazine lying beside his bed, half covered by a clutter of comics, dirty clothes, used tissues, broken guitar strings, and empty bottles.

The cover date of the magazine is twelve months ago. Inside, amongst the collection of sleazy photographs and letters from fantasizing teenagers is a six-page spread of Kathy Hammond. She is long-haired and young looking, dressed in a girl's school uniform of white blouse, plaid skirt, and knee socks. In each photograph the girl wears increasingly less clothing. The photographs are credited to a "Mr C. Hammond."

If the investigators do not make the connection, an Idea roll suggests that Mr. Hammond might be related to the deceased—a brother, father, or husband. A sticker on the outside back cover of the magazine bears the address of the shop where the magazine was purchased: "Hammonds Adult Books" and the address.

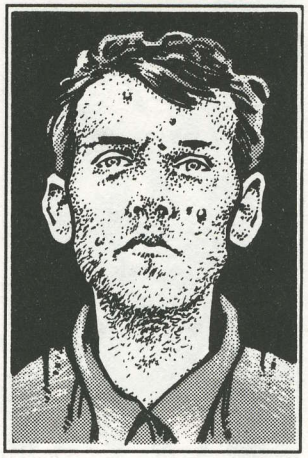
The Squat

LIKE a cancer in an otherwise healthy body, the ramshackle house that was Kathy's squat stands out clearly on an otherwise ordinary city street. Broken glass gleams in its windows, wooden boards nailed behind the shards. Across its grey brick facade are painted the words "Need a home? Here's one. Anarchy." Instead of a front door a rusty slab of corrugated iron has been nailed over the door frame. It can be lifted open at one corner, providing entrance to the dark and dirty place.

If misery had an odor it would smell like the inside of the squat—stale, damp and slightly rotten. As the investigators step forward, eyes slowly adjusting to the noisome gloom, call for Luck rolls. Those failing discover that some of the floorboards have been ripped up. Those failing a DEX x5 roll pitch forward to the floor, suffering 1D2 points of damage. Any investigator trying to arrest their fall by clutching at the wall finds it coming away beneath their fingertips in strips of damp wallpaper and rotten plaster. In the shocked silence which follows there comes the sound of rats scrabbling somewhere inside the house, then a low moan.

Matthew Piper, Addict

At the time of their visit the investigators find only one person in residence. Everyone else has moved on or died, their only lasting record in the world a funeral notice scrawled somewhere on the wall of the toilet where they overdosed. It is only a matter of time before this sole inhabitant meets the same end, to be found white and cold some time in the near future. Most of his time meanwhile is spent huddled on the sagging couch in the lounge-room watching the rats play amongst the ruins of his life.



Matthew Piper

With his glazed and sunken eyes, bruised and pasty skin, cracked and bleeding lips and matted hair, Matthew is not a pretty sight. His emaciated frame is racked by tremors. To his disordered mind one visitor is much the same as another and he speaks to investigators as if he has been expecting them. Matthew's voice is slurred and wandering. He often forgets what he was saying halfway through a sentence and will never be able to remember the investigators' names.

Because of his addled state, investigators have to be extremely patient to make any sense of Matthew's ramblings. He remembers Kathy well, and talks about her as though she still lived in the squat, despite the fact that he knows of her death. Where she lived before coming here Matthew does not know, although the mutual friend who introduced her to the household, Marco, thought that it was her parents who started her on heroin to begin with.

Investigators who ask about Marco learn that he died of an overdose about a month ago, in this very room. It was Matthew himself who found the stiffened corpse lying curled up in a puddle of vomit on the floor, the needle Marco used to inject the fatal dose still in his vein.

Matthew asks the investigators if they have bought him any heroin and told no, he whines, pleading with the investigators to front him some. Once he accepts the fact that the investigators are not drug dealers, Matthew begins sulkily searching among the litter on the floor for a syringe, scraping powdered remains of heroin out of discarded foils. Any conversation with Piper must be held as he searches for a fix or before he injects it. Once he has shot up, Matthew is beyond all questioning for well over an hour.

Kathy's Room

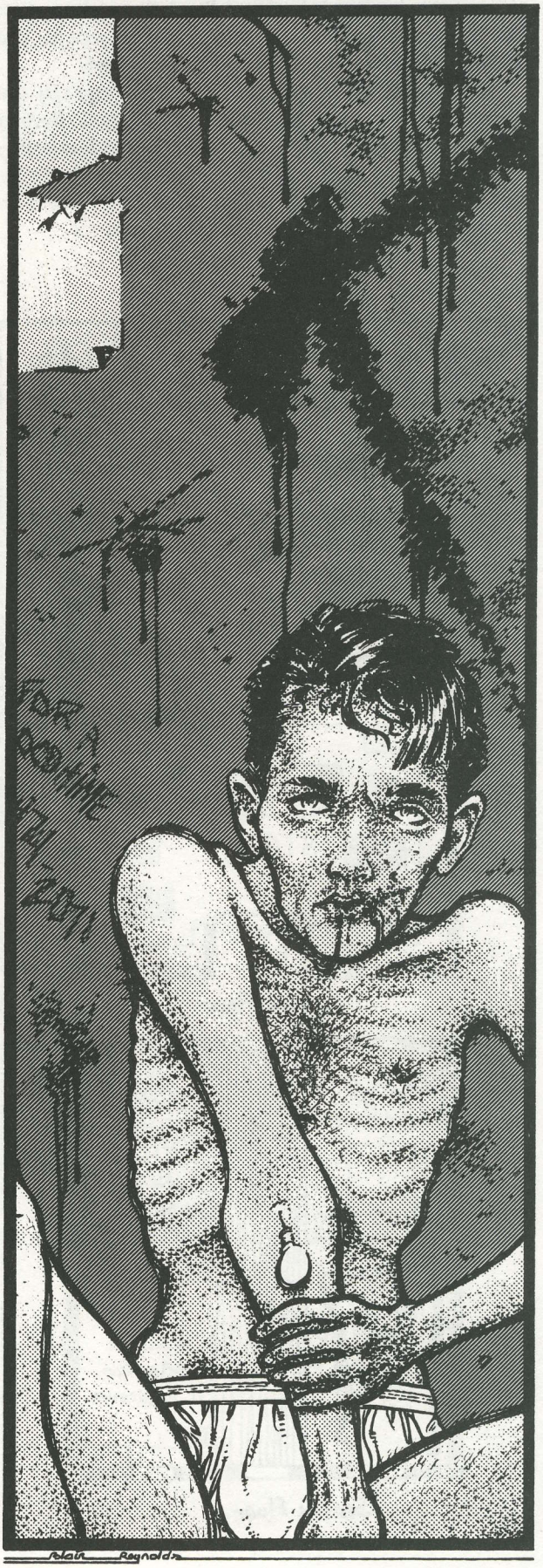
The bedroom which was Kathy's seems little larger than a closet. A stained mattress covers most of the floor, the rest scattered with clothes, cosmetics and assorted rubbish. One wall is covered by a collage of faces cut from magazines and newspapers.

Spot Hidden rolls reveal two items of interest.

An issue of *Girltalk* magazine, a pornographic publication featuring photos of naked men in various provocative poses, lies in the mildewed folds of the bed linen. A sticker on the outside back cover gives the name of Hammonds Adult Books along with an address.

It takes two Spot Hidden rolls to find this clue. The first lies crumpled in the litter on the floor. It is a photograph of three people, a weaselish man with thinning, ginger hair, and a grossly overweight woman. The shape of the third person has been carefully cut out of the picture. Part of a store front appears in the background of the photo, on which parts of the words "Hammonds Adult Books" can be seen.

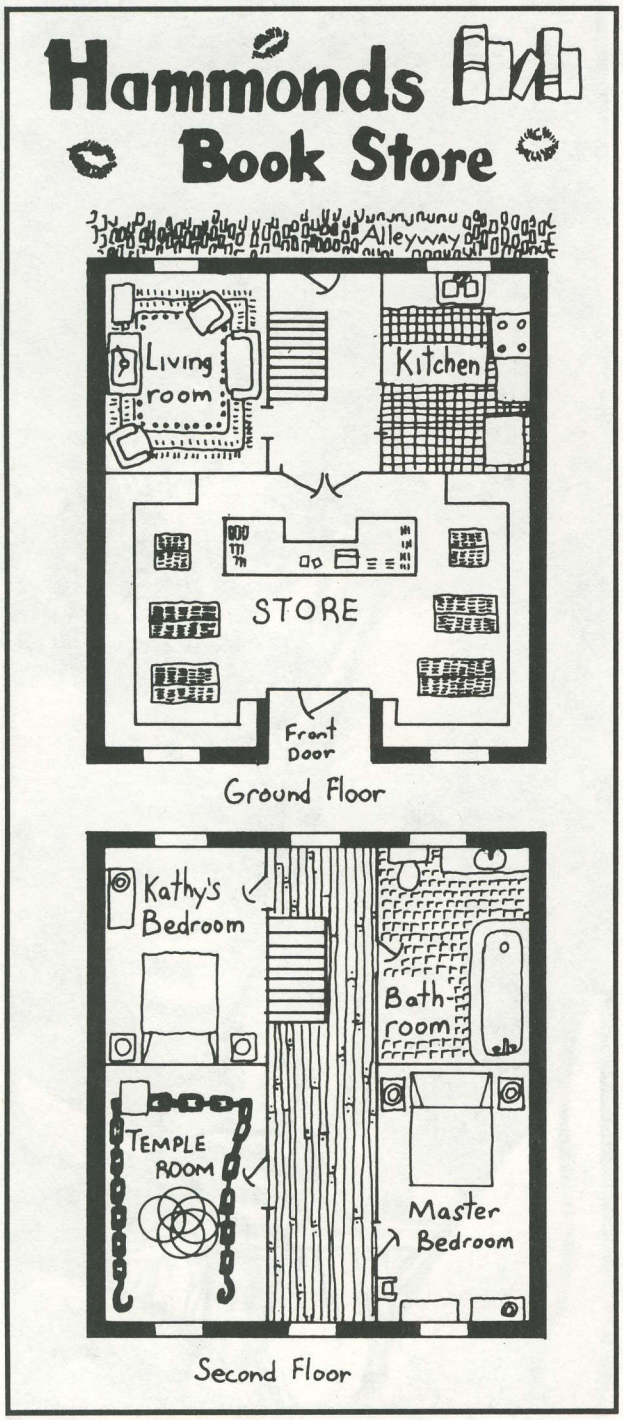
A second Spot Hidden roll finds the snipped portion of the photograph pasted among the montage of rich and famous faces glued to the wall. It is Kathy, in her school



Matthew boosts his fix

girl uniform, her hair in braids. A Psychology roll suggests that this represents Kathy's attempt to escape from her real life into a fantasy world of rich and famous people.

The middle-aged couple in the photograph are Kathy's parents, as an Idea roll might suggest. Further Idea rolls reason that Hammonds Adult Books is possibly owned by Kathy's parents, and is the shop in the background of the photograph. A Photography roll identifies the photo as being taken by an instamatic camera.



Hammonds Adult Books

THIS street consists of small storefronts with apartments above. Hammonds is sandwiched between a butcher's shop and a place specializing in electronic goods. A green sedan is parked out front. The bookshop's front window is painted over, and the words "Hammonds Adult Books" lettered upon it. A hand-written sign on the door warns patrons not to enter "if nudity offends." The shop is open from 2 PM to 2 AM six days a week.

The Rear Alleyway

An alley runs the length of the block behind the buildings. Hammond's is guarded by a stout back door (STR 14) and a curtained, barred kitchen window on the first floor. A second story bathroom window can be reached by a drainpipe. A successful Climb roll is needed to ascend to the bathroom window but the investigator's SIZ must be matched against the drainpipe's STR of 14 to avoid a collapse and nasty fall.

Inside the Store

Inside, the investigators find a fluorescent-lit store stocked with inflatable plastic sex dolls, row after row of shrink-wrapped magazines, clinically gleaming toys of plastic, leather and steel, and a glass-topped counter displaying dope pipes, condoms, and lubricants. Presiding over it all, leering at the investigators from behind the counter, is the weasel-like Colin Hammond.

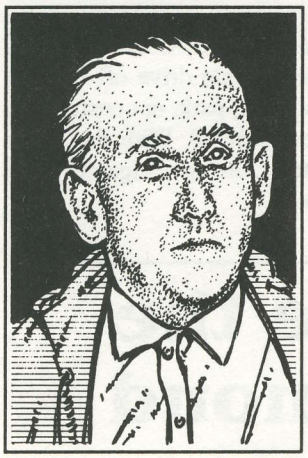
Investigators pretending to be customers can browse and chat with Hammond without arousing suspicion. Hammond is adept at making polite conversation with his clientele. Experience has shown him that most browsing customers prefer to be left alone, the majority of them embarrassed to be here at all. Only if the investigators speak first will Hammond strike up a conversation. Those who know him to be the father of the murdered girl take note of the fact that he evidences no sign of distress or anguish.

Investigators looking over the stock can spy, with a successful Spot Hidden, a recent issue of the sado-masochistic magazine *Dungeon* featuring a photograph of Hammond on the cover. Though bound and gagged, enough of his face is visible for him to be recognized. Posed with him is a grossly obese woman dressed in black leather and carrying a whip. Neither person is identified on the cover. If the magazine is purchased and the shrink-wrap removed, identification of the people in the cover photo is found on the contents page.

Possessed Pornographer

Colin seems quite unremarkable, a weak and unassuming looking man. He is older and balder than he appeared in the discarded photograph investigators might have found at the squat. Hammond strongly resembles the man described by Honeysuckle Rose as the last person Kathy was seen talking to on the night of her death. Should the investigators have forgotten this detail the keeper may care to remind them of it with an Idea roll.

Y'golonac is always within Hammond, watching through his eyes. Most of the time it lies dormant, but it can control Colin's actions whenever necessary. Whenever Y'golonac desires to come forth, or if Colin speaks its name, the man transforms into the Great Old One within a single round.



Colin Hammond

Although Hammond is insane, the controlling intellect of Y'golonac maintains a facade of rational behavior. If successful Psychology rolls are made against him, Colin seems only mildly neurotic. Certainly he does not come across as a probable psychopath. Only if Y'golonac abandoned Hammond's body completely would the man become the drooling, babbling maniac he really is.

Asking About Kathy

Hammond himself is more than happy to talk to anyone, usually to whine about something, or discuss the various sordid pleasures he is experienced in. If asked about Kathy, Hammond begins to act out the role of a bereaved father, but not too successfully. If pressed, Hammond admits that his love for his daughter soured several years ago.

Kathy had always been a difficult child, he explains, but as a teenager she became wild and uncontrollable. At age fifteen she began listening to "that dreadful punk music," and by sixteen was addicted to heroin. She ran away from home shortly after her seventeenth birthday, about eight months ago. Ever since then Colin and his wife have been dreading, but half-expecting, the worst. A Psychology roll detects that, on this occasion at least, Hammond is telling the truth. What he does not tell is how Kathy was driven to her rebellion by his own cruelties.

Meet Mrs. Hammond

Should the investigators spend more than a few minutes inside the shop, successful Listen rolls detect heavy footsteps moving around upstairs. This is Edith Hammond. She shouts down at Colin every 1D6+5 minutes, usually to nag him about some household task. If he ignores her, perhaps occupied talking to the investigators, Edith stomps downstairs.

Edith Hammond

She surges through the double doors behind the counter, a great, blubbery mountain of a woman, dressed in a floral print dress the size of a small tent. Her tiny eyes glare out at the world from a red and angry face. Although her hair is long, while working Edith wears it pulled back in a tight bun. Edith orders her husband off, serving the customers herself.

A Psychology roll on Edith suggests that her domineering attitude stems from a barely-suppressed fear of Colin, although she is perhaps not aware of this. If asked about Kathy, Edith tells a story similar to her husband's. Whenever the Hammonds are together and in public Mrs. Hammond is very much the dominant partner, Colin snivelling ineffectually around her.

Although Edith has long been the dominant partner in this relationship, this has changed since the couple first contacted Y'golonac five months ago. Now, when the god comes to Colin she becomes submissive, its devoted slave, a complete reversal of her usual relationship to her husband. Edith grovels naked at its feet, her unbound hair streaming down to her waist. Psychology rolls while talking to Edith for more than a few minutes reveal that she is violent, and insane.

It is possible that if Colin is killed, Y'golonac will possess Edith. Even unpossessed, she is a formidable opponent.

The Hammonds' Private Life

In the privacy of their own home Edith becomes even bossier with Colin, even overtly cruel, while his mood slips from weak to completely passive. Often he is punished, burnt with cigarette butts or slapped around for the even the slightest of misdemeanors.

On those occasions when Y'golonac is summoned or manifests itself, the Hammonds' relationship undergoes a complete reversal. Colin Hammond does not really exist when Y'golonac is present. The god merely dresses in his flesh, banishing Colin to some mental prison elsewhere. Horribly, Colin still experiences everything which the Great Old One feels and sees when it possesses him, further destroying his already shattered mind.

In abject servitude to Y'golonac, Edith spends her time when her God is present fawning at its feet. What thoughts go through her head are unknowable, other than those which hold her in unthinking bondage to the Great

Old One. Unless her God directly orders her to do otherwise, Edith remains unmoving and silent in its presence.

Watching the Book Shop

Staking out the Hammonds' book shop is not a difficult task. The pornographer and his wife remain unaware of the scrutiny unless it is blatantly obvious. Assuming the investigators are subtle enough not to be noticed, they spend several boring hours watching people enter and exit the bookstore. Now and again Colin Hammond himself leaves the shop, usually on simple errands for groceries or Edith's favorite candies.

As the day draws on, astute investigators making successful Listen rolls overhear her shrieked obscenities resounding out the shop door. Soon after, Colin leaves the shop; a Spot Hidden roll reveals he is nursing a bloody nose.

A Woman Arrives

Well past 11 PM a woman enters the shop—rare in a place whose customers are most often nervous adolescents and skulking men. Wrapped in a coat and scarf, investigators making Spot Hidden rolls recognize Honeysuckle Rose. Moments after Rose enters, a "Closed" sign appears in the front window and Colin locks the door.

Inside, having said that she wants to talk about Kathy and their involvement in her death, Rose is hustled upstairs by Colin and Edith. Under the pretext of being led to a fictional parlor, she is instead about to be sacrificed to Y'golonac. If the investigators do not immediately act, Rose will be drugged unconscious within minutes.

Alas for Honeysuckle Rose, from outside there are no obvious signs that she is in any danger. Strung up and ravaged by Colin while Edith watches and chants the Thirty-Five Abominable Adulations of the Bloated One, Rose dies within ten minutes of her arrival at the home. In her last moments of life she witnesses the terrible transformation of Colin into Y'golonac.

Investigators have several minutes to act before Rose is dispatched. As there is no immediate evidence of what is about to happen, however, investigators might not act until she is already dead, in which case see *A Corpse Leaves*, below.

Suspicious investigators might try to break in immediately. As it is late at night, any quiet attempts at burglary are unlikely to be noticed by the neighbors. Only if the investigators are noisy and obvious will the police be notified of a crime in progress.

Inside the house is dark and quiet. The only sounds come from upstairs, faint groans and low muttering. Investigators who burst in on the Hammonds as they go about their secret pleasures are confronted by the horror of Y'golonac. For further details see *Confronting The Hammonds* later in the scenario.

The next day, for those who care to look, Rose's torn and bloodstained clothing may he found in the alleyway behind the Hammonds' home, earning any investigators who see it a 0/1 Sanity point loss. Meanwhile the Hammonds have another body to get rid of. Like that of their daughter's, Rose's corpse will be dismembered and wrapped in plastic, ready for disposal.

A Corpse Leaves

Later the same night as Rose's visit, around the hour of 2 AM, Colin and Edith leave the house and load the wrapped, dismembered prostitute's remains in the trunk of their car. Those who realize that the plastic-wrapped shapes are all that is left of Honeysuckle Rose lose 1/1D3 Sanity points.

With the trunk loaded and closed, Colin locks the front door of the shop and the couple drive off into the night, their destination a lonely pier, park, or construction site, anywhere a body can be dumped. With the house abandoned for at least an hour, the investigators have ample time to search it for clues.

Inside the Hammond Home

ROOMS behind and above the shop are the home of Colin Hammond and his gargantuan wife. Swinging wooden doors behind the counter open to reveal a short hallway ending in the stout door which lets onto the rear alley. A coat rack is mounted on the wall near the rear door, several coats and an umbrella hanging from it. A staircase leads up from this hallway while two doors give access to the first floor living room and kitchen. There is no basement.

Both kitchen and living room are unremarkable. The meat freezer contains no shocking revelations nor are the many magazines scattered about at all unusual. The large record collection in the spartan and threadbare living room consists mainly of Frank Sinatra, Julio Inglesias, and Simon and Garfunkel. Small and dingy, the kitchen smells of cooking fat and fried onions.

Upstairs

There are four rooms upstairs, all of them small, the carpets threadbare and the furnishings dirty. Dust lies on every surface.

The hall window at the front of the house overlooks the street, as does the window in the Hammonds' bedroom. From either of these windows it is a drop of only a few feet to the shop awning; from the awning, a Climb or Jump roll sees an investigator safely to the street. The

awning is only of light construction with a STR of 12 which must be matched against the SIZ of the investigator. If it fails the resistance check, it tears, depositing the unfortunate investigator on the pavement for 1D3 points of damage.

Bathroom

This room is situated at the rear of the house with a narrow louvered widow looking out over the alley. Mold clings to every surface, even creeping in gray blotches across the mirror. The Hammonds' medicine cabinet contains the usual frayed toothbrushes, razors clogged with soap and bristle, and bottles of aspirin.

Investigators also find two 20 ml syringes and a large bottle closed with a rubber seal. The label, printed in Amsterdam, identifies the contents as Heroin, pure, 90% solution. A single milliliter of the solution would be almost certainly lethal, as First Aid, Chemistry, Pharmacy, or Medicine rolls show. Unless diluted, this heroin solution is a POT 10 poison per 1 ml injected. A full syringe would inflict 200 points of damage if the target's CON was overcome.

Keepers should note that if the investigators have broken in while Honeysuckle Rose is being sacrificed only one syringe will be found here. The other, together with the heroin, are in the temple.

Kathy's Bedroom

Here Kathy grew up surrounded by floral wallpaper—and here Kathy died, surrounded by the horror her parents had become.

For a place that has been witness to so much pain, this small windowless room is quite unremarkable except for the heavy manacles and chains bolted to the iron bed frame. Dried blood crusts the manacles and stains the bare mattress. If subjected to analysis, the blood proves to be the same type as Kathy's, matching blood samples taken from her corpse. The only other object of note in the bedroom is a one-eyed, fray-eared teddy bear propped on the empty chest of drawers

The Temple

This room was once a spare room, cluttered with outworn fragments of the Hammonds' life and marriage. Now that Colin has gotten religion, the room has been transformed into a temple—a monument to human perversity.

When the door is opened, a gust of foul-smelling air, tinged with decay, pours out into the hallway. There is no light fixture, even the light switch itself has been gouged from the wall. The Hammonds' god is one of darkness.

Manacles and wicked hooks dangle from thick chains, clashing and jangling disconcertingly if disturbed by investigators stumbling about in the dark. The chains seem to strain toward the pentacle burnt into the wooden floor. The shapeless remains of black candles are carefully placed around the outside of the cryptic symbol, the floorboards stained with dried and drying blood and littered by decaying scraps of food, empty wine bottles, and a motley collection of whips and pincers.

A large axe, encrusted with blood, stands in the corner near a wooden lectern. This alone, if retrieved by investigators may alert police and instigate a search of the Hammond's home. Forensic tests show the blood to be Kathy's but only Edith's fingerprints can be found, none of Colin's. If the axe triggers a police investigation, this results in the arrest and rapid institutionalization of the Hammonds.

Investigators who have entered the house to save Rose are confronted with her nude body hanging in chains. Edith kneels naked on the floor, her hair unbound, passively awaiting the coming of the God, while Colin writhes in ecstacy against Rose's drugged and unresisting body. The heroin and one of the syringes usually found in the bathroom are now here. Edith administered the drug to render Rose helpless. See *Y'golonac Manifests* below.

The Lectern

In one corner of the room stands a wooden lectern. Resting on it is a tattered and dog-eared manuscript, obviously a photocopy, stapled down one side. It is entitled *The Revelations of Glaaki—Volume XII.* It is opened to a specific page (see The Lonely Children Papers #3 below). The photocopy is of handwritten pages in some kind of lined exercise book. A successful Cthulhu Mythos roll identifies this book as a powerful tome, but one of which was said to consist of only eleven volumes.

> **Excerpt from *The Revelations of Glaaki—Volume XII.***
>
> "Beyond a gulf in the subterranean night a passage leads to a wall of massive bricks, and beyond the wall rises Y'golonac to be served by the tattered and eyeless figures of the dark. Long has he slept behind the wall, and those which crawl over the wall scuttle over his body never knowing it to be Y'golonac; but when his name is spoken or read he comes forth to be worshipped or to feed and take on the shape and soul of those he feeds upon for those who read of evil and search for its form within their minds call forth evil, and so may Y'golonac return to walk among men and await that time when the earth is cleared off and Cthulhu rises from his tomb among the weeds. . ."

The Lonely Children Papers #3

The Sanity loss for reading the open page is an automatic 1 point. Refer to the nearby box for further details concerning *The Revelations Of Glaaki.* Keepers should take careful note of which investigators read this excerpt of *The Revelations* or speak Y'golonac's name; they will be the focus of the Great Old One's attack.

The Hammonds' Bedroom

Colin and Edith's bedroom is small and squalid, dominated by a large and ugly four-poster bed. Clothes litter the floor, as do empty candy boxes and cigarette butts. A single window looks out over the busy street.

A successful Spot Hidden or careful search uncovers a photo album stashed under a pillow. Examination reveals it contains an unusual set of family photos—almost every one of them of a sexually explicit nature. Kathy is in most of them, her age varying over the years from about five to probably sixteen. The most recent set of five photographs shows Kathy as she was on the night she died—hanging from the chains in the room next door.

Colin Hammond appears in each of these last photographs but one. Investigators can note the tattoo of a broken heart located just above his groin. The last photograph of the series, thankfully blurred, shows Kathy and something else, something bloated, puffed flesh shining with an unwholesome corpse glow. Of roughly human proportions, it is definitely inhuman in form. A closer look reveals a tattoo of a broken heart just above the creature's groin. Anyone viewing this series of photographs suffers a loss of 1/1D3 Sanity points.

The Hammonds Return

The exact length of time that Colin and Edith are away is indefinite but they probably return in time to catch the intruders in their home. Listen rolls hear a car park in front and doors opening and closing. Investigators who hurry to the front window without taking reasonable precautions are clearly visible from below, illuminated by the streetlight. Once they see the investigators, Edith and Colin hurry into the shop and upstairs.

Edith is the first inside, and stampedes upstairs; the house trembles under her heavy feet. Colin follows behind, and does not transform into Y'golonac until Edith has entered the fray. Once Y'golonac is present Edith switches into her blank mode, slumping to the floor to watch the god and drool.

Y'golonac Manifests

While awaiting the coming of her god, Edith transforms from her normal aggressive self into a homicidal maniac and single-handedly attempts to kill the intruders who threaten the sanctity of her god. Leaping up the stairs or from the floor, shrieking like a banshee, she grabs whatever weapon is closest at hand, poker from the fireplace or knife from the kitchen. Colin, meanwhile, begins to change. If clothed, buttons scatter everywhere as he expands, his clothes tearing, shredding, the rents exposing pallid, spongy and faintly luminous flesh. Colin throws back his head and screams—then his face is swallowed by the god's bloating, glowing flesh. Wet red mouths open in the palms of its hands. At the beginning of the second round of combat Y'golonac is present in its full, mind-blasting glory. All witnesses lose 1/1D20 Sanity points.

Once Y'golonac is physically present, Edith loses all animation, attacking one last time before falling back to marvel at her god's devastating fury.

Fighting Y'golonac

Unless equipped with automatic weapons or a large selection of devastating spells the investigators may well find themselves defeated and destroyed by the Great Old One, although those who have read the open page on the lectern, or spoken Y'golonac's name out loud will suffer first. Investigators who have not read or spoken the Great Old One's name will be virtually ignored by it while it dismembers their more literate companions.

Investigators who have discovered the heroin and syringes can try to kill the avatar's body by overdose. A successful DEX x5 roll is needed to ram the needles into the Great Old One's flabby, phosphorescent flesh. Any attack inflicting more than 75 points of damage banishes Y'golonac from Colin's form. Forced to leave against its will, Y'golonac's consciousness erupts from Colin's body, horribly rupturing his torso. All nearby are spattered with lumps of gelatinous, stinking flesh, black blood, and loops of glistening organs. All lose 1/1D6 Sanity points.

Edith as God

If Edith is not dead when Colin-as-Avatar is killed, Y'golonac shifts its consciousness into her body and attempts escape. If successful, it may come back to haunt the investigators at a later date, the Edith-thing appearing at a front door grinning at them from a rapidly growing number of mouths. If the investigators also dispatch Edith the problem does not occur.

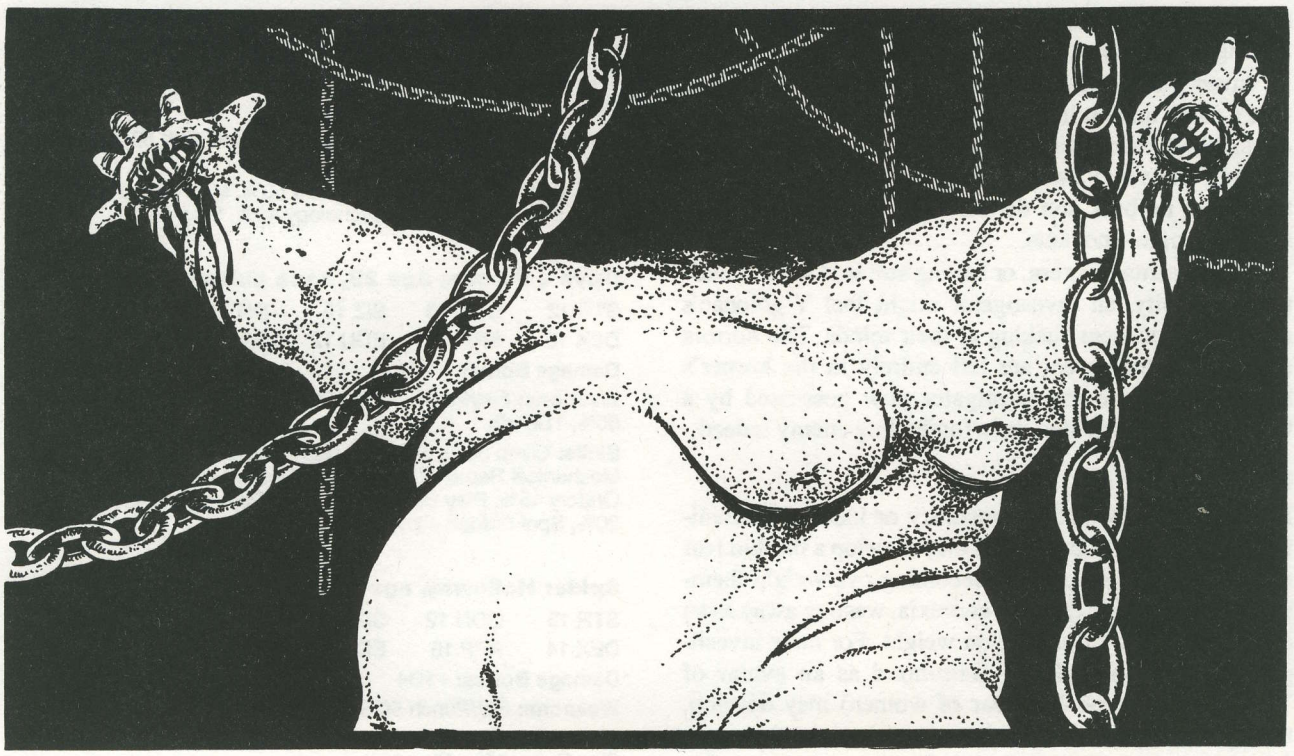
The Revelations of Glaaki

This book originally consisted of eleven handwritten volumes successively authored by different members of a cult based in the Severn Valley of England during the early 19th century.

A privately published edition of nine volumes appeared in 1865, secretly copied, and unauthorized. It was also somewhat expurgated. Two entire volumes, those deemed too blasphemous, were deleted from the print run. Both the pirated edition and the original concern themselves mostly with the worship of a being called Glaaki, referred to as one of the Great Old Ones. Peripheral matters are dealt with, but in only brief detail, and only where they connect with the nature and teachings of Glaaki.

A long-rumored twelfth volume was produced in the 1920s. Colin Hammond paid $5000 for a photocopy of this volume, owned by a friend of one of the shadowy customers that frequent his establishment. Anyone reading it loses 1D2 Sanity points and adds 2 percentiles to their Cthulhu Mythos skill.

The photocopy is 200 pages long (100 in its original notebook form, written on both sides of the page) and can be read in the course of a long evening. It contains the only specific references to Y'golonac extant in any volume of the entire *Revelations of Glaaki*. Horrible as these brief passages are, they are vague and uninformative, unless complimented with references available only to the most well-read of Mythos scholars.



Manifestation of Y'Golonac

When possessing Edith, Y'golonac's form is even more hideous than before. As well as its headless, bloated, glowing appearance, together with fanged mouths gaping in the palms of its hands, the Great Old One will sprout another drooling mouth, lined with teeth, between what were Edith's thighs. The Sanity point loss for seeing this aspect of Y'golonac is 2/1D20+1.

Unless investigators have read or spoken Y'golonac's name it cannot possess them, but once these conditions are met the Great Old One is aware. Distance is no object and it will travel hundreds of miles to come for them.

An Alternative

Investigators who favor a less direct approach than those outlined above may try to arrange for the police to arrest Edith and Colin Hammond for the murder of their daughter. Without evidence such as that found in the house—syringes, axe and blood-encrusted manacles—the investigators have no case. As noted earlier in the scenario, Detective Sergeant Ted MacIntyre is unlikely to listen to interfering investigators. If given concrete proof, however, he will be forced to act.

Once arrested, Edith and Colin are quickly declared insane, their case never coming to trial. If handed into the police as evidence, the album of photographs found in the Hammonds' bedroom goes mysteriously missing. Of its whereabouts none ever know, save the solitary person who takes it out from hiding late at night to gaze longingly and lustfully over the final picture. Incarcerated, neither of the Hammonds can be of use to Y'golonac's dead and dreaming mind and it withdraws its alien consciousness from them. Hopelessly mad, they rot within the walls of the city's most secure insane asylum until claimed by death, or something worse.

Conclusion

IF Honeysuckle Rose survives this scenario she remembers nothing of the inhuman horrors she was witness to. Although grateful to the investigators for saving her from the Hammonds' murderous hands, she is not one to give rewards. Nonetheless, Rose may be willing to perform a favor for the investigators in days to come, making for an interesting and colorful ally.

If both the Hammonds are dead, investigators have two corpses on their hands to dispose of. Burning the house down is one solution but investigators are sure to come up with different methods. Murderers, thanks to modern police methods, rarely go uncaught in this day and age. Keepers may care to be lenient in this respect, although a prison sentence would make interesting history for an investigator.

Aftermath

The keeper might bear in mind that any investigator who has read or spoken Y'golonac's name can be possessed by it. It need not be immediate; having already fought the god at least once, it might be considered a trifle excessive

to expect the investigators to then battle Y'golonac possessing one of their own companions.

Investigators who have read or heard the Great Old One's name remain influenced by that event for years. In dreams they catch glimpses of pale, flabby flesh, realizing only when they awake screaming that the things scuttling over its bulk and dwarfed by its size are ragged, eyeless people—not ants.

At moments of stress, or having suffered some devastating insanity, an investigator might feel Y'golonac's alien consciousness sucking at their minds. The horrors of such a future event are left entirely in the keeper's hands. An insane ex-investigator now possessed by a Great Old One would make a foreboding enemy indeed.

Insanities

Investigators who suffer temporary or indefinite insanities as a result of this scenario may develop a morbid fear of overweight people, or of becoming overweight themselves. Some might develop anorexia, wasting away as an extreme reaction to putting on weight. For male investigators who beheld Edith Hammond as an avatar of Y'golonac, Gynephobia (fear of women) may develop. Coitophobia (fear of sexual intercourse) might also result for any investigator male or female who took part in this scenario. Investigators may also develop unusual sexual habits, drug dependencies and other symptoms of degenerate behavior, even if they do not go mad.

Rewards

Ensuring the demise or incarceration of Colin and Edith, and the evil they contain, earns each investigator 2D10+2 Sanity points. Investigators who saved Honeysuckle Rose from death each gain an additional 1D3 Sanity points.

Statistics

Honeysuckle Rose, age 39, prostitute

STR 11	CON 10	SIZ 9	INT 11	POW 10
DEX 13	APP 13	EDU 11	SAN 45	HP 10

Damage Bonus: 0

Weapons: Fist/Punch 65%, 1D3; Kick 45%, 1D6; Broken Bottle 60%, 1D6.

Skills: Bargain 75%, Charm Customer 80%, Listen 60%, Pick Pocket 25%, Sneak 75%, Strut Provocatively, 80%.

Karl McIvor, age 23, drummer

STR 14	CON 12	SIZ 10	INT 11	POW 12
DEX 15	APP 10	EDU 9	SAN 60	HP 11

Damage Bonus: 0

Weapons: Fist/Punch 65%, 1D3; Kick 45%, 1D6; Broken Bottle 60%, 1D6.

Skills: Bargain 40%, Climb 45%, Listen 40%, Mechanical Repair 35%, Pick Pocket 30%, Play Drums 75%, Sneak 30%, Sneer 100%.

Baz Elliot, age 19, guitarist

STR 13	CON 12	SIZ 14	INT 15	POW 13
DEX 14	APP 12	EDU 10	SAN 65	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3+db; Head Butt 50%, 1D4+db; Kick 45%, 1D6+db.

Skills: Electrical Repair 35%, Law 50%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Play Guitar 80%, Psychology 40%, Sing 45%.

Dave Johnson, age 20, bass guitarist

STR 12	CON 13	SIZ 13	INT 12	POW 10
DEX 13	APP 12	EDU 12	SAN 50	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3+db; Kick 45%, 1D6+db; Club 60%, 1D6+db.

Skills: Climb 50%, Electrical Repair 40%, Listen 50%, Mechanical Repair 50%, Operate Heavy Machinery 15%, Oratory 45%, Play Bass Guitar 75%, Psychology 45%, Sing 20%, Spot Hidden 40%, Throw 40%.

Spider Holloway, age 21, vocals and rhythm guitar

STR 13	CON 12	SIZ 16	INT 16	POW 17
DEX 14	APP 15	EDU 12	SAN 85	HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D6+db; Kick 35%, 1D6+db.

Skills: Fast Talk 35%; Glare 100%, Jump 40%; Listen 60%; Play Guitar 45%, Sing 85%.

Colin Hammond, age 45, purveyor

STR 10	CON 9	SIZ 11	INT 16	POW 13
DEX 14	APP 8	EDU 12	SAN 0	HP 14

Damage Bonus: 0

Weapons: Fist/Punch 35%, 1D3

Skills: Accounting 45%, Bargain 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 12%, Grovel 75%, Listen 70%, Photography 70%, Rub Hands Nervously 100%, Sneak 30%, Whine 80%.

Edith Hammond, age 42, domineering wife

STR 14	CON 15	SIZ 19	INT 15	POW 15
DEX 10	APP 8	EDU 10	SAN 0	HP 17

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Accounting 55%, Bargain 70%, Bully 95%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Nag 100%.

Weapons: Axe 45%, 1D8+db; Claw 50%, 1D3+db; Kitchen Knife 50%, 1D6+db; Strangle 45%, 1D3 per round (STR vs. STR to break free).

Y'golonac, Great Old One

STR 25	CON 125	SIZ 25	INT 30	POW 28
DEX 14	HP 75	Move 10		

Weapons: Touch 100%*; Devour 100%, 1D4**.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D20

*This is a psychic attack. Touched, the target must make a roll of POW x5 or less to avoid being overcome and helpless. The victim loses 1 point of INT and 1 point of POW each round until Y'golonac is either forced away or the victim's soul and mind are devoured and replaced by Y'golonac's.

**Attacking with the mouths in the palms of its hands, Y'golonac causes 1D4 points of damage that never heals, forever remaining an open and suppurating sore.

Further details concerning Y'golonac can be found in the Call Of Cthulhu rules book. ■

Nemo Solus Sapit

(None Is Wise Alone)

"Voyagers among the unknown find hideous truth revelatory; for them, the realization of the inherent meaninglessness of the cosmos reveals horizons unknown. Although this vision tends towards the unwholesome, those making the discovery find it anything but. A landscape of unguessed-at possibilities awaits them, even as their former lives turn to dust."

True Magic,
by Theophilus Wenn

THIS scenario is nominally set near the fictional city of Samson, California, a metropolitan area of nearly 4 million people located on the Pacific Coast approximately 115 miles south of San Francisco and 225 miles north of Los Angeles. This city was featured--and partially destroyed--in Chaosium's *At Your Door*. If preferred, the keeper may easily move this scenario to almost any locale.

Keeper's Information

Located in the mountains northeast of Samson, California, is the famed Van Dyson Center, an innovative psychotherapy clinic founded by therapist, researcher, author, and talk-show favorite Dr. Petroff van Dyson. The Center specializes in the study and treatment of schizophrenia, its radical methods often criticized by members of the psychiatric establishment. Van Dyson's treatment calls for an empathic bond to be established between patient and therapist. As described in his published notes, *You Are I*, this method blurs the line between individuals, the patients often coming to believe that they and their therapist are one and the same person.

Dr. Petrof Van Dyson

Two years ago the state of California committed to the Van Dyson Center a patient named Damon Newcomb, a young man lost in the depths of chronic schizophrenia. A failed academic, Newcomb's secret, intensive studies of the Cthulhu Mythos had brought about the gradual dissolution of his mind. Attracted by Newcomb's condition—and his mad ramblings—van Dyson took a personal interest in the case. Over several months of therapy Newcomb revealed endless secrets about the true nature of reality, and of the terrible entities he claimed lurked at its heart.

Initially, van Dyson approached Newcomb's visions as Freudian models. The doctor's notes talk of dark Shub-Niggurath, described as a model for lust, and mother-longing; Nyarlathotep, a representation of the many social masks we all wear; Azathoth, Newcomb's subconscious abstraction of his own self-destructive tendencies.

Damon Newcomb

But van Dyson failed to realize how cunning his patient was. Playing off the doctor's own desires and fears—Dyson's history of abuse as a child and his failing marriage—Newcomb slowly gained the upper hand. This finally culminated in a late-night trip to a secluded valley near the Center where, with the aid of a group of heavily-drugged patients, Newcomb successfully summoned forth a being he called the Daemon Sultan. The sight of the monstrous god surrounded by its swirling, piping minions drove van Dyson mad, leaving his reason in tatters. They survived the summoning but before long, Newcomb and van Dyson undertook a concentrated study of the Mythos, van Dyson's credentials gaining them access to sources previously denied Newcomb, the doctor's methodical researches balancing Newcomb's wobbly insights.

But even then van Dyson was driven by his desire to understand human emotions. Despite his many successes there were still those patients who could not be reached. It was obvious to him that some patients simply would not respond within the confines of the clinic; their problems lay in the world outside. It was while studying an ancient tome that van Dyson came upon the solution—a magical spell, *Consume Likeness*.

Choosing one of his less treatable patients, van Dyson carefully murdered him, then ate the man's corpse, taking

An Optional Start

If the keeper wishes to run this scenario straight out of the box, several changes are required.

First, instead of a fellow investigator, van Dyson's victim is a friend or family member of one of the investigators. This individual (loony Uncle Mal or whoever) has probably been in the state institutional system for a while. The scenario begins with a late night call from Uncle Mal.

"This is Mal...Uncle Mal...you gotta get me outta here...that crazy guy...he's gonna do something, I know...hrf—" and the line goes dead.

Of course, you may need to change Uncle Mal to whoever is appropriate.

Calls to the Center reveal that the friend or relative cannot be seen for another week, as he is suffering a relapse and is under heavy medication. Nothing dissuades the staff from this position. During this time, of course, van Dyson devours Uncle Mal and is soon ready to assume his identity if and when needed. Alternately, if the investigators somehow force a confrontation sooner than van Dyson is ready, the doctor uses the spell *Cloud Memory* to eradicate any suspicion of his wrong-doing.

When the investigators finally make the visit (see *The Insane Friend* below), van Dyson will have learned about the desperate phone call they received (cut short by an orderly) but not of what was said. If investigators attempt to trip up the disguised van Dyson by asking obscure questions about Uncle Mal's life, van Dyson claims partial amnesia, a result of illness, or he may attempt to confuse the investigators with his *Cloud Memory* spell.

Whatever method he uses, the investigators will probably sense that something screwy is going on. The rest of the scenario can proceed as written except that van Dyson may fail to fully realize the threat posed him by the suspicious investigators.

his time, using the same careful precision with which he approached any experiment. He then used the spell to assume the identity of the murdered patient and arranged for the man's release. Using the knowledge gained during therapy sessions van Dyson spent several weeks living in the man's home, sleeping with the patient's wife and playing with his children. Feeling that he had finally learned where the center of his patient's problems lay, he staged a relapse and returned to the clinic.

Van Dyson was elated by this natural extension of his method. Psychologists had always found a barrier between them and true understanding; they could never *be* their subject. But now van Dyson could. Of course, the patient would be unable to benefit from this new understanding—but such is the way of science.

Newcomb watched all of this with sniggering joy. While the doctor 'played patient,' Newcomb had nearly the run of the clinic. His unchecked use of van Dyson's pharmaceuticals left him increasingly unbalanced while his degenerate mind continually searched for new ways to express his madness.

Eventually Newcomb's secret molestations of several patients came to van Dyson's attention. Enraged at the man's behavior he restrained Newcomb then performed a quick and simple lobotomy. Inserting a stiff wire through Newcomb's tear duct, the doctor whipped it back and forth, slicing up the forebrain. Newcomb was then dumped off in downtown Samson to join the other derelicts wandering the streets. Van Dyson retained Newcomb's special walking stick, a cane the madman had designed to hold a substantial number of magic points. Although incapable of recharging the item, van Dyson does know how to tap its power.

Several months ago van Dyson found an even baser use for his new-found ability. A meeting with his estranged wife, Candice Lee, resulted in a heated argument that resulted in her death at the hands of an out-of-control van Dyson. Fearing the law, van Dyson devoured his wife's corpse then assumed her likeness, resigned her professorship at UC-Samson and moved her out of her apartment. Nowhere did he leave a forwarding address.

Most of Candice's furnishings are now in a basement room of van Dyson's home near the clinic. Retiring often to this place, van Dyson holds long, vicious, imaginary conversations, switching between himself and the magical likeness of Candice, arguing their differences, pleading for her return, and berating her for leaving him. Following the trail of Candice's disappearance leads to the heart of this scenario, where the investigators may confront what Petroff van Dyson has become.

Involving the Investigators

Although a second option is offered (see nearby boxed text) the best way to begin this scenario is to have an insane investigator committed to the Van Dyson Center. The center need not be named, nor any special attention brought to it. It may even be engineered so that the investigator is transferred here from whatever facility they were initially placed in—by whatever machinations the keeper sees fit. Van Dyson is well-known among the psychological community and if he takes a charitable interest in the welfare of what seems an otherwise hopeless case, few will deny him the opportunity. The necessary papers are signed, family permission gratefully given, and the patient quickly transferred to the West Coast. This unfortunate character, after being pumped for his Mythos secrets, is killed and eaten by the mad psychiatrist.

Pronouncing the investigator cured, van Dyson then arranges for his or her release, notifying the other investigators that their friend appears sufficiently cured of his malady. Picking up their friend at the clinic, the investigators do not meet van Dyson, nor are they able to make arrangements to see him. The receptionist, Della, explains that he is out of town on a vacation.

Van Dyson, disguised as the now-dead investigator, accompanies the group in an effort to learn more about the Mythos, incidentally stealing any tomes or magic items he deems desirable. Van Dyson's secret presence among the investigators requires extensive cooperation from the investigator's player who must be secretly told at the onset that his investigator is dead and being impersonated by the mad van Dyson.

With the investigator returned to his or her friends, send the group off on an unrelated adventure. Van Dyson participates flawlessly, though he may exhibit an occasional partial amnesia (covering up gaps in his knowledge). He may seem unusually curious, or even occasionally absent himself in order to take care of personal business in his normal guise. Once he has learned all he wants to know, he stages a relapse. If one or more investigators show an unusual suspicion he may even attempt to stage an accident that results in their deaths.

Whatever the outcome, the investigator returns to the Van Dyson Center, leaving his or her friends puzzled and upset, perhaps even vengeful. As far as van Dyson is concerned, he's through with them, although the investigators may feel differently.

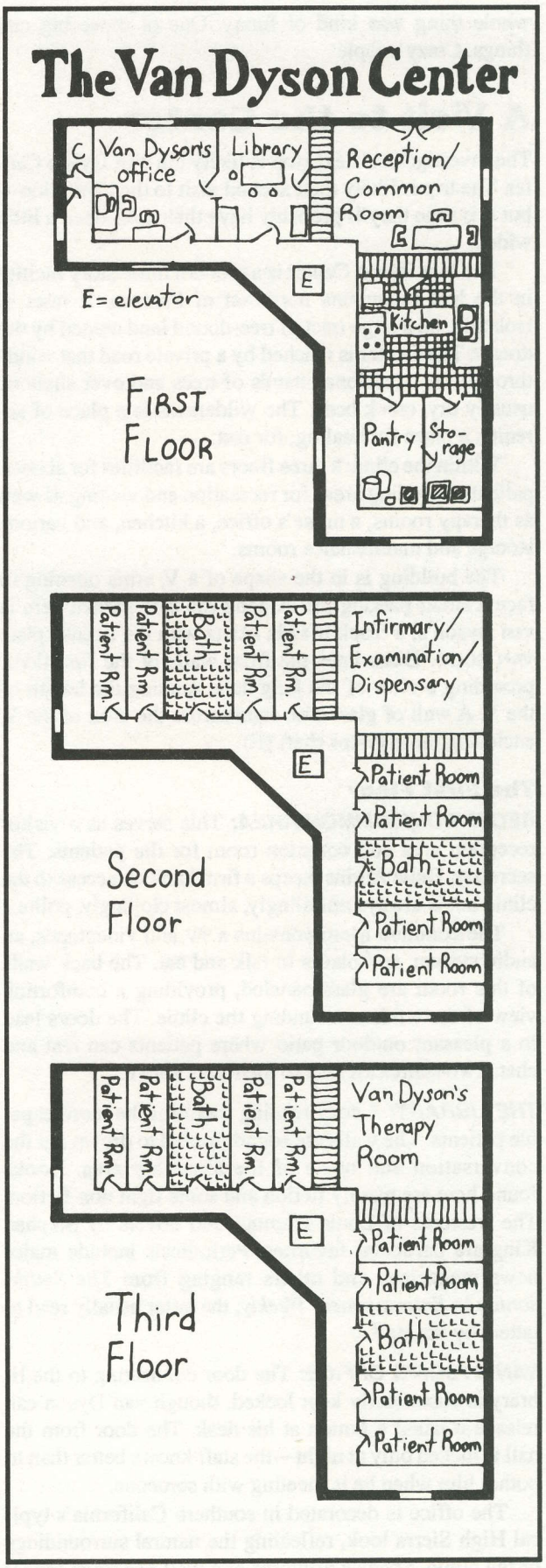
And somewhere on the streets of Samson, Damon Newcomb wanders in a daze, his identity lost. He, too, has plans for Doctor van Dyson.

The Van Dyson Center

HOW and where the investigators begin trying to find out what went wrong with their friend is largely up to how the keeper staged the released investigator's relapse. Van Dyson guarantees the character's readmittance to the Van Dyson Center by committing some socially unacceptable act, probably out of the other investigators' presence. Police called to the scene take the unfortunate one into custody and within hours he is back at the Center.

To begin with, the investigators probably want to find out how and why their friend suffered a relapse. Checking with the police, they are told that the person in question was exhibiting strange behavior (keeper's choice) in public. When the police checked his records they learned that he had recently been released from the Van Dyson Center, and quickly arranged for his return.

The patrolman who picked up their friend is Officer Jack Pleack, an earnest young man from a small town, still a bit amazed at the sights of the big city. He recounts the actions of the investigator he arrested with a straight face and a level tone, professional and all business. Successful Psychology rolls indicate that Pleack thinks the



whole thing was kind of funny. One of those big city things. Crazy people.

A Visit to the Center

The investigators' next stop is likely the Van Dyson Center. The trip is likely their second visit to the institution—but this time they'll probably have their eyes open a little wider.

The Van Dyson Center is a modern three-story facility in the low mountains northeast of Samson. It rests in isolation, on a large tract of tree-dotted land owned by the doctor. The Center is reached by a private road that winds through the occasional stands of trees and over shallow, usually dry, creek beds. The wilderness is a place of serenity, a place for healing, for rest.

Within the clinic's three floors are facilities for sixteen patients including areas for recreation and visiting as well as therapy rooms, a nurse's office, a kitchen, and various storage and maintenance rooms.

The building is in the shape of a V, arms opening to face a small parking lot. Among the cars parked here is van Dyson's, a black Mazda Miata with the license plate VAN GOGO. Glass lines the front walls of the first floor, providing a view of the long halls running the length of the V. A wall of glass also runs across the crux of the V, enclosing the elevator shaft (E).

The First Floor

RECEPTION/COMMON AREA: This serves as a visitor reception area and common room for the patients. The secretary, Della Atkins, keeps a firm hand on access to the clinic but is always unfailingly, almost cloyingly, polite.

The common room contains a TV and videotapes, an audio system, and places to talk and eat. The back walls of this room are glass-paneled, providing a comforting view of the wilds surrounding the clinic. The doors lead to a pleasant outdoor patio where patients can rest and chat. Two staircases lead to the floors above.

THE LIBRARY: A cozy reading room for the more-capable patients. The walls are soundproofed to drown out the conversation and noise of the assembly area. Books found here are mainly fiction and some light non-fiction. The westerns of Louis L'amour and novels by Stephen King are particular favorites. Periodicals include major news magazines and others ranging from *The Smithsonian* to *Entertainment Weekly*, the latter usually read to tatters by the staff.

VAN DYSON'S OFFICE: The door connecting to the library is customarily kept locked, though van Dyson can release it using a button at his desk. The door from the hall is locked only at night—the staff knows better than to bother him when he is meeting with someone.

The office is decorated in southern California's typical High Sierra look, reflecting the natural surroundings of the clinic. Spanish artworks and wall hangings accent the tasteful, though not indulgent, furnishings. In cabinets by his desk van Dyson keeps his patient's recorded therapy sessions—always locked. His desk sports a Macintosh personal computer. Only rarely does van Dyson use this office for meetings with patients; a room on the third floor serves that function. In his office van Dyson works, reads, and meets with outsiders such as family members of the patients, their friends, and van Dyson's colleagues.

The session tapes with Newcomb reveal van Dyson's descent into madness. Listening to the entire collection takes over 200 hours, costing the listener a total of 2D6 Sanity points while adding 10 percentiles to their Cthulhu Mythos skill. If investigators choose to listen to only some sections of the tapes the keeper will have to judge what exactly they learn about Newcomb and van Dyson as well as Sanity point losses and skill increases. Certainly there is little they need to hear to recognize the menace of van Dyson; understanding all that has caused it takes time and taxes the mental health of the listener.

Investigators examining the Macintosh and making a Computer Use roll note that van Dyson has an internal send/receive fax/modem. The number for the modem line is not written down anywhere but is merely one number different from the normal phone line: 555-9678 for the Center, 555-9679 for the modem. With this number van Dyson can link up with a similar computer in his home.

Van Dyson's computer files provide information as well. The office computer holds financial and accounting files for the Center, showing it to be turning a tidy profit both from its not-infrequent upscale patients but also from consulting fees, lectures, and seminars sponsored by the Center. Medical records for all current patients are also found (non-current ones are in the physical files), as well as mundane business correspondence. If accessed via the modem, see the description of van Dyson's house for information held in his home computer.

A closet lies just outside van Dyson's office, containing a vacuum cleaner, carpet shampoo, and other housekeeping items.

KITCHEN AND PANTRY: A large facility capable of providing three meals a day for staff and patients.

STORAGE: Mundane articles such as toilet paper, cleaning supplies, etc. No sensitive materials are kept here; pharmaceuticals are in a locked cabinet in the Infirmary.

Second Floor

INFIRMARY: This is the domain of Nurse Wagner, and contains an examination room, dispensary, and various physical therapy machines. Wagner and her assistants Karen Lahti and Suzy McQuinney—both interns from UC-Samson Medical School—see to the physical health of the patients, designing fitness regimens and planning diets. Medicines and supplies are kept here under lock and key, though the special pharmaceuticals used by van Dyson in his researches are found in the session room on the third floor.

PATIENT ROOMS: The rest of the second floor is taken up by eight patient rooms and two large bathrooms. Each room is decorated differently, often with accessories provided by the patients or their families.

Third Floor

THE SESSION ROOM: This is where van Dyson treats his patients. Besides several pieces of comfortable furniture the room contains audio-visual equipment for the recording of sessions as well as for presenting a-v stimuli as required. Not insignificantly, there is little else in the room, and most of the equipment is locked and bolted down. A large locked cabinet holds pharmaceuticals, syringes, etc., including the special drugs used by van Dyson in his therapy.

PATIENT ROOMS: These are for the most part identical to those on the second floor.

The Orderlies

A minimum of two orderlies are on duty at all times, usually spending their time strolling about the upper floors, chatting with nurses and patients. Three additional orderlies are assigned to the day shift, working downstairs in the kitchen and common room. They are all well-paid professionals, strong and capable, compassionate and friendly.

Like all the staff, they wear discreet beepers which in an emergency can be used to summon help. If the beeper is jarred violently and repeatedly (such as during a fight), or is separated from its wearer, an alert signal buzzes on the other units and help responds.

Meeting van Dyson

Should the investigators be thoughtful and make an appointment to meet with Dr. van Dyson, they'll have no trouble doing so. If they just show up, however, hoping to get in, they'll need to Fast Talk their way past Della, the secretary. Persuasive requests are of no avail, but using some slick ruse might succeed. If they manage to get an audience with Dr. van Dyson, he waves off Della when she comes by to check up on the visitors and their suspicious-sounding claims.

However they arrange it, the meeting with Dr. van Dyson is everything it should be: polite, informed, and unproductive. The doctor volunteers only the most basic facts about their friend's condition; as yet he has reached no theory explaining the friend's sudden relapse.

Toying with the group, van Dyson may mention a few things he claims the patient has talked about recently, and begin tossing off the names of Mythos entities like they were celebrities. He then launches into an extended discourse on how the ill person obviously is engaging in a violent and occult-oriented fantasy life. Allow the players to laugh at the good doctor's supposed naiveté; they are welcome to shoot knowing looks back and forth all they like; van Dyson does whatever he can to encourage their mistaken opinion of him.

It is likely that the investigators will want to meet with their friend. Van Dyson is agreeable to this. He tells them that he has work to attend to, but one of his assistants will take them to meet their friend. Van Dyson then takes his leave.

Hector Simõne

Hector Simõne

After a moment or two, the assistant, Hector Simõne, enters the room. A graduate student at the University of California-Samson's prestigious school of psychology, Hector is an honest, straightforward man without a clue to van Dyson's wrongdoing. The good doctor uses select magicks—*Dominate* and *Cloud Memory* in particular—to keep Hector in the dark. Unbeknownst to van Dyson, the unfortunate Hector is being simultaneously manipulated by the insane Damon Newcomb using similar spells.

Hector leads the investigators out onto the patio where a number of patients recline in the afternoon sun. They find their friend awaiting them.

Interview with a Friend

At this point the player whose investigator van Dyson has eaten needs to get busy again and put on an appropriate performance, claiming no memory of the events leading up to his arrest and return to the clinic. Van Dyson, now in the guise of the investigator, wants the group to feel reassured that their friend is indeed insane as well as innocent of malice. He exhibits appropriate behavior, attempting to ape whatever phobias or afflictions the investigator initially suffered from. The investigators are welcome to question their friend, van Dyson providing whatever responses he thinks will pacify the questioners.

Successful Psychology rolls during the interview suggest that their friend is not quite right and perhaps hiding something, but the signals are confusing. What the investigators are picking up is van Dyson's natural edginess during the interview. They will probably interpret it as something else, of course, and badger him accordingly. Before too much of this goes on however, their friend grows suddenly weary and Hector appears, requesting them to let the patient rest.

Hector shows them the way to the front door. If the investigators ask to see van Dyson, Hector tells them that the doctor is with another patient, but they may make another appointment for the next day if they wish. If the investigators persist, van Dyson may agree to speak with

them in an hour or so. Of course, their friend will have to be taken back to his room before van Dyson can reappear. If the investigators have somehow remained in the presence of their friend, the doctor stages a mental attack of some sort in order to get away from the investigators.

A second interview with van Dyson reveals nothing of importance. Investigators who pursue the possibility of getting their friend out of the Center find it nearly impossible to get the patient released to their care, or even transferred to a different facility. If, through legal channels, they are finally successful, van Dyson hurriedly stages a suicide, making extensive use of *Dominate* and *Cloud Memory* to confuse the varied state and local officials who inevitably become involved.

Van Dyson's Background

At some point during the adventure the investigators will probably want to learn a little more about Dr. Petroff van Dyson. Allow each to make a halved Know roll, investigators who are members of the medical community should be allowed normal chances. Those whose professions are in the field of psychology should be awarded automatic success. Success recalls the following information.

Now a well-known psychologist, van Dyson was born in Burton Green, England, 46 years ago. He first became something of a minor celebrity with the publication of his book, *Never Alone* (Knopf, 1986), a personal and moving account of abuse he suffered as a child. The idea of a psychologist dealing with his own problems caught the public's attention and soon van Dyson was making the rounds of the talk shows, eventually serving a stint as a paid sound-bite on cable television's CNN (the 24-hour Cable News Network). Two years ago, his book *You Are I* appeared, igniting a storm of controversy within the medical profession. Some said the fury aroused by van Dyson's radical therapy methods was due more to his circumvention of the usual medical journals than the techniques promoted in the book.

If the Know roll was equal to or less than one-fifth of the skill, the investigator also recalls that Dr. van Dyson was divorced shortly before *You Are I* was published. The divorce was by and large unpublicized.

Both van Dyson's books are still in print and available in paperback; they can be read in about six hours apiece. Of the two, *Never Alone* is by far the more impressive, relating Dr. van Dyson's sad childhood and his efforts to come to terms with his past by helping others. Making a successful Psychology roll, the reader perceives that van Dyson shared a deep bond with his wife, the former Candice Lee. He even credits her with his coming to grips with his past. The book is lovingly dedicated to her.

You Are I is less affecting. Van Dyson attempts to present the theory underlying his radical new method of treatment in common language, geared for popular consumption. Van Dyson's experiments regarding the biochemical 'spurs' that cause emotions, and his further discussion of sympathetic therapy—becoming one with the patient and then leading them out of their problem—is fascinating reading for the thoughtful. Perceptive readers (Idea roll) note that van Dyson's methods rely heavily on the use of medication to diffuse the patient's sense of reality, thereby attempting to increase the patient's perception of his or her own emotions.

Library Research

Each day of research, combined with a successful Library Use roll, uncovers a couple of minor articles about the doctor, usually coinciding with his book releases or television appearances. If the investigators spend three successful days at the library, or specifically state they are looking for this information, they can find a few articles about van Dyson's divorce. One, an interview conducted with James Brady for the *PARADE* syndicated newspaper supplement makes brief mention of the divorce and coyly relates van Dyson's utter refusal to broach the subject. "The wounds are deep," writes Brady with his usual perception.

Articles from before the divorce mention Candice Lee van Dyson in pleasant terms. She is often said to be hovering about during interviews, bringing coffee, one ear monitoring the questioning in a warmly protective manner. It is mentioned that Candice is a professor of Astronomy at UC-Samson.

Following up on these leads, investigators find smaller articles dealing with the mysterious disappearance of Candice Lee some six months following her divorce from the doctor. The articles relate that after resigning her position at UC-Samson, she paid off the lease on her apartment and moved away. Parents and friends have no idea of her whereabouts.

Where is Candice Lee?

THOSE wishing to learn more about Candice most likely begin at the Astronomy Department of UC-Samson (their seal is the constellation of Taurus with the inscription *Sabiduria Estrellada*). The Department's secretary tells them that Professor Lee (she reassumed her maiden name after the divorce) left the University about six months ago. If the investigators persist, the secretary suggests that they speak with Dr. Tomlinson, head of the department. Tomlinson is probably not immediately available but arrangements can be made to meet with him later that day. In the meantime they can simply wander around and talk to any handy professors.

Candice Lee

Anyone asked about Professor Lee tells investigators that she was a warm, personable, gifted educator. Her colleagues, mostly male, have nothing but praise for her—Psychology rolls suggest that more than one was attracted to her. Souring their recollections is the memory of Candice's sudden and abrupt departure from the University. She spoke to no one other than Tomlinson that day, simply coming in, announcing her resignation, then later sending a moving company to pack up her office possessions. "Diaz Transports," one of the professors recalls.

None of her associates learned of her resignation until after she had left, and none has spoken to her since. Theories about her sudden departure range from boredom with her duties, to a better salary offered elsewhere. Her harsh severing of long personal ties is still a source of hurtful speculation.

Any scientific research Candice was involved with has no bearing on the investigation, though suspicious investigators may wonder otherwise. If they press for information they learn that her work was almost entirely in the technical side of astronomy, working to improve telescopes and optical lens-grinding techniques. For the most part she simply enjoyed teaching students about the workings of the stars.

Dr. Tomlinson

Dr. Tomlinson

Dr. Tomlinson is an attractive if somewhat nebbishy man in his early forties, afflicted with a slight stutter that he has worked hard to eradicate. The stutter becomes more pronounced when he gets emotional or excited.

First and foremost Tomlinson wants to know what interest the investigators have in Professor Lee. A Fast Talk attempt succeeds only in getting a few questions answered before Tomlinson thinks better of it and terminates the interview. Persuade would be of much more use. A successful roll along with some convincing (and hopefully truthful) arguments from the investigators convinces Tomlinson to help them.

Tomlinson tells much the same story as outlined above, adding only that Professor Lee was a capable astronomer and a welcome presence in the department. Tomlinson asks, somewhat off-handedly, if the investigators have any idea where she might be.

If pressed, Tomlinson reveals that he has learned from Candice's friends and parents that shortly after resigning, Candice packed up her belongings and moved out of her Samson apartment, leaving a check sufficient to cover the months remaining on her lease. She has not been seen since. Her parents talked with the police who checked around and found nothing to suggest foul play, odd as the situation may be.

During the conversation, a successful Psychology roll suggests that Tomlinson was more than a little attached to Candice. If one of the investigators successfully Persuades Tomlinson to talk about his relationship with Candice, his stutter grows more pronounced as he reveals that he and Candice had been seeing each other for quite some time (exactly how long he refuses to say). Upon resigning she said nothing about their relationship. He protested bitterly but when he mentioned their feelings for each other she recoiled strongly, as if shocked or disgusted. She refused to talk about it and soon after angrily left. Subsequent attempts to contact her proved futile. Wherever it is she went, she went quietly and without leaving a trail.

Tomlinson has little more he can add. If the investigators have pried out all of the above information, he is on the verge of tears. It is apparent that he cares for Candice Lee deeply and has been terribly hurt by her actions.

Further Leads

A number of options exist for the investigators who wish to find out more about Candice Lee and her disappearance.

Doctor van Dyson

However approached, van Dyson remains calm, saying only that their divorce was due to irreconcilable differences, and that he saw her only a few times before she left the area. He has no idea why she might have left or where she might have gone. This is all he can offer.

He asks the investigators what interest they have in Candice, privately disbelieving whatever fabrication they choose to trot out. Contacting van Dyson about his wife accomplishes little except to warn him that the investigators have an unhealthy interest in him. Considering what their late friend may have told him about their methods and objectives, he takes this very seriously.

Diaz Transport

Running down this little firm isn't difficult, but a Fast Talk or Persuade roll is needed to find out about the job they did for Candice Lee. The company was hired to pack up the contents of her office then deliver them to Candice's apartment. Here the office equipment and her

apartment belongings were loaded into a rental truck. The clerk easily recalls the job as Lee paid the entire fee cash up front—highly unusual.

Candice's Parents

Candice's parents live in San Francisco, a 150-mile drive to the north. They can be contacted by phone or in person. Edith and Timothy Lee are healthy, gregarious people quite worried about their daughter. Fast Talk turns them off, but a Persuade roll convinces them of sincerity.

Her parents say that Candice spoke but little about her divorce, only that she wasn't happy with van Dyson anymore and that the two of them didn't get along. A Psychology roll reveals the father's mild distaste for the doctor, though the reason for this is hard to pin down. Candice's disappearance came as a complete surprise and her parents have had no contact with her since. They feel she must have had good reasons for leaving so suddenly, but can't imagine what they would be. Investigators who make a Luck roll receive an offer from the couple: they will help cover expenses if the group continues looking into their daughter's disappearance.

The Landlord

Candice's former landlord and neighbors prove happy to talk. She lived at The Ventura, an upscale apartment building consisting of four floors surrounding a Spanish courtyard and pool. Her landlord, Wes Dean, recalls her as a good tenant, mentioning that when she moved out she left a check to cover the months still remaining on her lease. He says that she seemed calm and reasonable when he last saw her. She gave no reason for her departure, saying only that she had a better opportunity elsewhere.

Her neighbors can relate the same story, except to add that she said little on the day she moved out. If the keeper wishes, investigators who poke around may learn that Dr. Tomlinson from the University was a frequent visitor.

Samson Police

The Samson police are of little help. Detective John Lowe was in charge of the case and is curious as to why the investigators are poking around. How helpful he is depends on the keeper; Lowe has knowledge of virtually all the information in the preceding sections, but isn't likely to hand out such morsels without good reason.

Handwriting

Experienced investigators who suspect van Dyson of somehow impersonating his wife might wish to compare handwriting samples. Plenty of early samples of Candice's signature can be located at UC-Samson but the only thing signed by van Dyson in disguise is the work order for Diaz Transport.

The signatures do not match in the slightest, a factor overlooked by van Dyson and evidence that could be instrumental in proving to the police that something is amiss. Even more damning is the fact that the Diaz signature reads "Candice van Dyson," rather than "Candice Lee." Should a graphologist be consulted, he or she can find definite similarities between the Diaz Transport signature and van Dyson's handwriting.

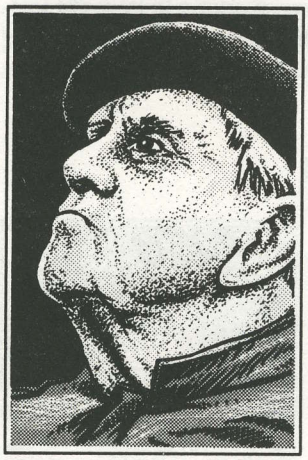
The Van Dyson Property

A CHECK at Samson's Hall of Records shows that van Dyson owns eight square miles of mostly undeveloped land in the mountains east of Samson. The deed is held by his corporation, Vangogo Inc., which also holds the copyrights to his books. Building permits for both the Center and his private home are on file, dating back five years.

The property abstract shows the land was formerly owned by a Morton Belmont who still owns a good portion of the land bordering van Dyson's property.

Morty Belmont

Morty inherited his property from his grandfather who long ago was among the first to settle in these parts. Five years ago Morton sold off a good piece of the property in order to pay the back taxes due on the property he still owns. Although once again his taxes are overdue, he has so far refused to sell any more land to van Dyson.



Morty Belmont

The investigators may wish to approach Belmont about his neighbor. Belmont's home is on the same road to the Center and van Dyson's home, but about six miles further on. His rambling cabin, parts of it sixty years old, is the abode of a life-long bachelor and near hermit. Incongruously, a black television satellite antenna decorates the front yard.

Belmont is almost always at home, reading or watching his impressively large library of soft- and hard-core adult videotapes. Belmont is sixty-five years old and referred to as "a character." He is the bane of local county meetings, showing up for every session to rant about taxes and lack of services. Investigators find it isn't difficult to get him started talking.

If asked about van Dyson, Belmont has plenty to say. First and foremost, he swears never to sell another piece

of property to "that stuck-up son-of-a-bitch." Besides being rude, van Dyson has not taken care of his property, the virgin hillsides sold to him by Belmont.

The Blasted Valley

Should the investigators ask him to elaborate, Belmont takes them for a walk, showing them a sight that is as stunning as it is disturbing. The hike takes about ten minutes and during this time Belmont takes the opportunity to gripe about government interference and the way things have gone downhill since the days of his grandfather. Soon they arrive at the boundary of Belmont's and van Dyson's property. Cresting a rise an open valley appears before them.

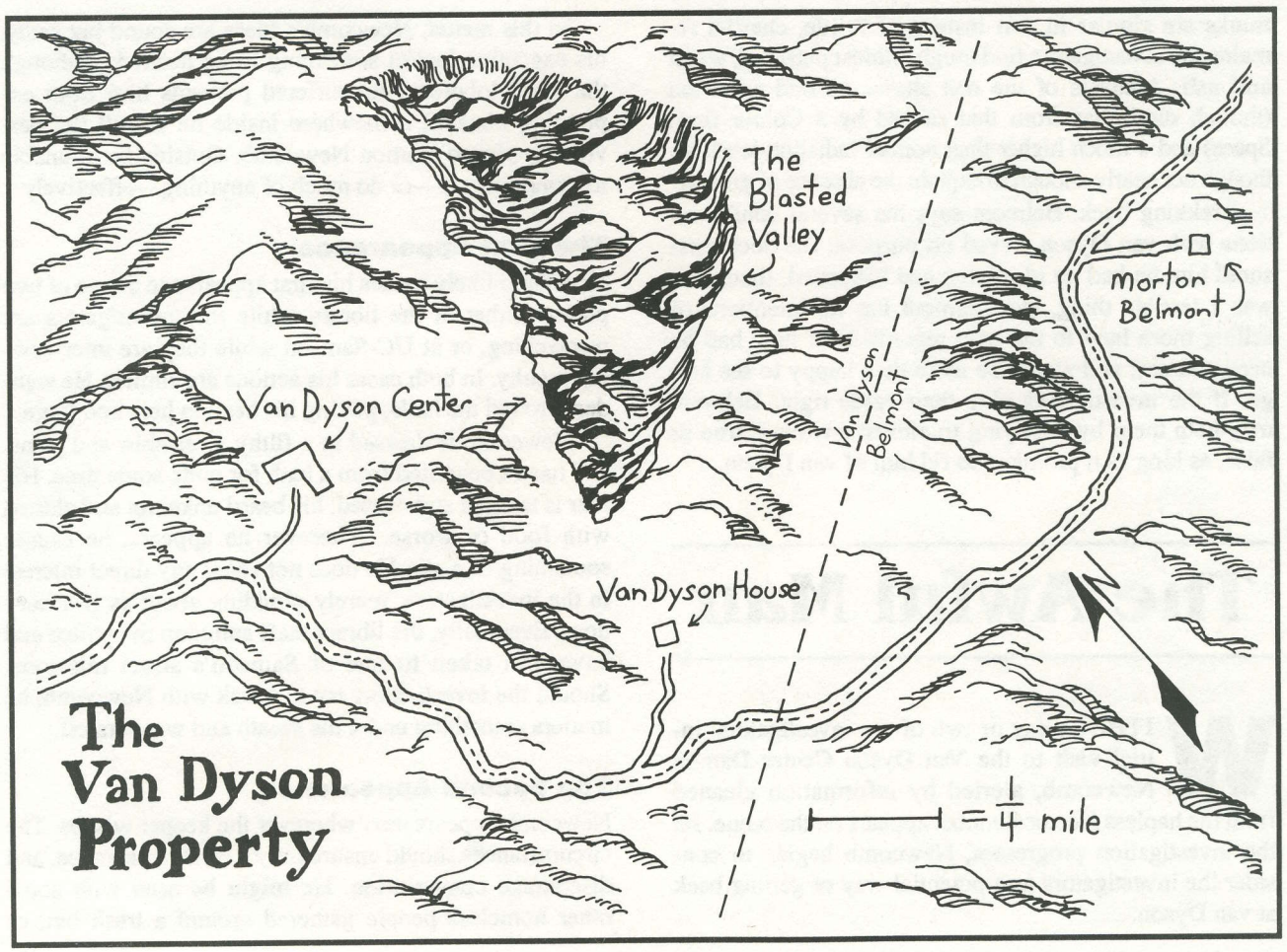
There is nothing but scorched earth for a quarter mile in each direction, the ground blackened and hard—charred, desiccated remains of trees thrusting upward like rotting, black bayonets. Even trees lining the circle, those spared the wrath of the actual holocaust, are dead or dying. The birds are quiet here and observant investigators may notice that they do not fly over the wasted earth (Idea roll).

"What do you make of this?" asks Belmont, cocking an eye toward the investigators. "This all happened about a year and a half ago and still there ain't nothin' growing out there. Tweren't no ordinary fire that burned this place up."

Belmont recalls the night it happened. There was a terrific thunderstorm that evening, but despite the wind and driving rain, the sudden explosion and massive afterglow that pulsed and burned lit up the sky like it was daylight. He credits the storm for preventing the fire from spreading, but by the same token questions how, in the rain-soaked conditions, a fire could have started in the first place. He speculates that the destruction was the result of a single massive blast rather than a spreading fire.

Although Belmont lacks any evidence, he steadfastly maintains that van Dyson was somehow responsible. Belmont has already looked into the possibility of a meteor or other heavenly body, but nearby Eastwood International Airport reported no sightings, nor did the Astronomy department at UC-Samson receive any reports of bolides. "Van Dyson's to blame, sure as shootin," Belmont says—then he launches into a diatribe against the doctor, accusing him of being a liberal, a Democrat, and worse.

Investigators who approach closer to the circle detect a faint, alien odor, a combination of vinegar and ash unpleasant to the nose. Examination of the circle shows the edge to be quite distinct, the area where no growth meets healthier soil cleanly-defined. The barren soil is hard packed and requires the use of a tool if any appreciable sample is to be retrieved for later analysis. The ruined tree



The Blasted Valley

trunks are similar in that instead of brittle, charred remains the investigators find tough, almost petrified, wood and ash. Analysis of the soil shows an odd spectrum (though dissimilar from that caused by a Colour from Space) and a much higher than normal radiation level, although not nearly enough to explain the absence of growth.

Trekking back, Belmont says his several confrontations with van Dyson served no purpose; the doctor assured him he had no idea what had happened, thought it was a terrible thing, etc. Belmont has no intentions of selling more land to the man regardless of how bad he needs money, and would be more than happy to see him go. If the investigators play their cards right, Belmont may help them by testifying to almost anything, true or false, as long as it promises to rid him of van Dyson.

The Awful Man

WITHIN a day or two of the investigators' initial visit to the Van Dyson Center Damon Newcomb, alerted by information gleaned from the hapless Hector Simõne, appears on the scene. As the investigation progresses, Newcomb begins to consider the investigators as a potential way of getting back at van Dyson.

In this matter, Newcomb's ideas are sound but sadly, his execution leaves something to be desired. Although the hasty lobotomy he suffered prevents him from expressing himself, somewhere inside he is still the perversely wicked Damon Newcomb. Outside he is unable to communicate—or do much of anything—effectively.

The First Appearance

Newcomb likely makes his first appearance at one of two places: either at the library while the investigators are researching, or at UC-Samson while they are interviewing faculty. In both cases his actions are similar. He wanders around the halls, poking his head in here and there.

Newcomb is dressed in a filthy sweatshirt and jeans, and hasn't benefited from a bath for quite some time. His hair is tangled and matted, his beard unkempt and clotted with food or worse. Wherever he appears, he causes something of a stir. He does not show any direct interest in the investigators, merely plodding about as if at random. Eventually, the library staff summon the police and have him taken to one of Samson's street missions. Should the investigators try to speak with Newcomb, he mutters something under his breath and wanders off.

The Second Appearance

Newcomb appears next wherever the keeper wishes. The circumstances should ensure only a brief appearance, and discourage conversation. He might be seen with some other homeless people gathered around a trash bin, or

perhaps being roughed up by some concerned cops. He shoots a nondescript glance at the investigators, but does not otherwise pay attention to them.

The Third Appearance

The third appearance is somewhat different. Rather than allowing Newcomb to show up in person, have an investigator's neighbor, relative, or other such acquaintance comment on the street person that he saw loitering around the neighborhood while the investigator was gone. The man, fitting Newcomb's description, hung around the investigator's home or office for a while, then moved on. But before he left he gave an envelope to the neighbor with the investigator's name written on it. The rumpled, dirty envelope contains an equally rumpled and dirty piece of paper on which is written in careful and attractive penmanship a cryptic message.

"I found it likely. Perhaps so.
Incidents are rising.
Damon"

This message is Newcomb's incoherent but precisely written plea for aid, and a warning of danger. It is quite likely to cause some consternation among the puzzled investigators.

Damon Newcomb Speaks

Whenever the investigators have done as much research as is likely, but before they do something drastic like breaking into the Center or van Dyson's home, stage the following encounter.

While discussing their research (and hopefully expressing bafflement at the events), the investigators should make Listen rolls. A success indicates that they hear someone outside. The exact circumstances may vary depending if they are in a house or an apartment. Investigating, they find Newcomb crouched down facing a wall, eating something. His meal is a dead cat, freshly killed, its neck snapped (lose 0/1 Sanity points). If the cat belongs to an investigator, so much the better (lose 1/1D2 Sanity points). Newcomb looks up with blood and bits of viscera in his beard and licks his lips.

"Mea culpa," he says.

He then stuffs the carcass of the cat into a dirty paper bag, though if prevented from doing so he offers no resistance. If allowed to retain his meal, he keeps the bag with him from now on, snacking on the contents periodically.

Whatever their reactions to this event, Newcomb is here to speak with them in his own limited fashion; hopefully the investigators will be canny enough not to sic the police on him just yet.

The resulting conversation has to be handled very carefully. Remember that Damon Newcomb, already insane and a worshipper of Azathoth, has as a result of van Dyson's crude surgery lost all his basic social skills and instincts as well. Although he wants to express his hatred of van Dyson, he is thwarted by the fact that he occasionally thinks that he *is* van Dyson, a leftover from the sympathetic therapy the doctor subjected him to. Newcomb attempts to communicate the following:

- ☐ Express his hatred for his condition. This may be accompanied by intermittent snacking from his sack of rended cat, if he still has it.
- ☐ Explain that the investigators' friend died some while back. This may be hard for them to believe. After all, he was there during their last adventure.
- ☐ Explain that van Dyson is dangerous and has to be stopped.

Note that it is not necessary for all or even *any* of these points to be understood by the investigators; the scenario does not hinge on successful communication with Newcomb. He talks almost continuously once started, but makes little sense, as his note revealed. He eagerly responds to questioning, but again offers little of use. Keep in mind that the objectives listed above are only guidelines for the kinds of oddball things he might say.

Newcomb's Departure

At some point Newcomb abruptly gets up and leaves. Trying to detain him only makes him angry, and he tries to force his way out. He wants to go get Hector Simõne, and use *Dominate* to communicate through him (it doesn't occur to him to use one of the investigators), but of course he is be unable to express this.

If the investigators summon the police to pick him up, he goes docilely. Doing so gains the investigators his name from the cops, but prevents him from further aiding the group. He ends up back at the clinic, in the hands of van Dyson.

If allowed to leave, he goes to Simõne's apartment building only to find van Dyson waiting for him. Not surprisingly, Newcomb has been clumsy with covering up his magical interrogations of Simõne and van Dyson has learned of his meddling. Van Dyson tranquilizes Newcomb and takes him back to his house near the Center. Hector Simõne remembers none of this, but as usual wonders why he can't seem to get much studying done these days.

Tailing Newcomb

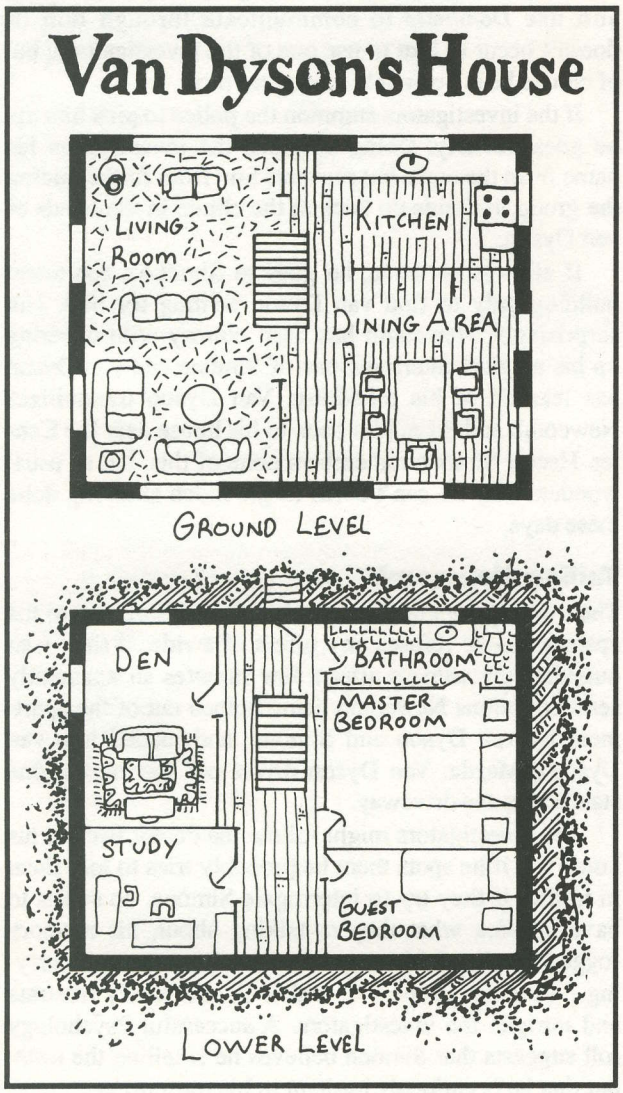
The investigators might secretly follow Newcomb to the apartment—he refuses any offers of a ride. If they wait outside, they witness after a few minutes an apparently semi-conscious Newcomb being helped out of the apartment by van Dyson and Simõne, and loaded into van Dyson's Mazda. Van Dyson drives off leaving Simõne standing in the driveway.

The investigators might follow the doctor back to his house but if he spots them he probably tries to lose them in traffic. If they try to interrogate Simõne, he seems to have no idea what they're talking about, his memory fogged by *Cloud Memory*. He doesn't even recall carrying Newcomb to the car, which should surely frustrate and intrigue the investigators. A successful Psychology roll suggests that Simõne believes he is telling the truth, but that he is curiously hesitant in his responses.

Should the investigators follow Newcomb to Simõne's apartment *and* accompany him to the door, he does not protest. Inside, van Dyson instructs Simõne to summon the police. He is confident that if Newcomb is picked up, he can eventually get him back to the clinic and finish him off. And of course the police will provide trouble for this annoying group of investigators. Under these circumstances Simõne will not open the door to anyone but the police.

The Doctor's House

VAN DYSON'S home is located a scant five minutes from the Center, located along the same road as the clinic. Built on the side of a slope the home is a new, split-level affair with large windows providing a view of the abundant scenery.



Inside it is apparent that van Dyson likes to be surrounded with nice things. Not necessarily expensive things, but things that are pleasant and tangible. The carpeting is plush, the furniture comfortable and attractive, tending towards the earth tones of the outside surroundings. An interest in the exotic shows up in his *objects d'art*, which include small representative bits of statuary and carvings from many cultures, ranging from kachina dolls of American Indians, to little jade statues from Japan, to amulets and jewelry of Celtic, Roman, and Russian origin. All of the pieces are of some value, in the $100-$500 range, yet are clearly the sort of things to be handled and admired rather than placed on a shelf and forgotten.

The Ground Floor

Entered from the driveway, this level contains a living room, kitchen, and dining room. The level below is reached by a short stairway and features a cozy den, master bedroom, study, and guest bedroom.

The open areas (living room, dining room, den) are warm and pleasant, equipped with high-end audio and video equipment. His collection of compact disks shows an emphasis on Russian composers—Mussorgsky and Stravinsky are particularly well-represented. Videotapes and laserdiscs for a recently acquired player show a preference for film noir and include cinemaphile editions of classics in wide-screen letter-box format.

The Study: In most respects a duplicate of his office at the Center, it includes a computer and external modem. Besides many other unimportant items, contained in his file cabinet is the phone number that connects to van Dyson's computer at the Center. It can be found with a successful Library Use roll.

Van Dyson keeps most of his reference books at the clinic; the library of his home is more general. No Mythos tomes are found here, with the exception of any he may have stolen from the investigators. Van Dyson's recreational reading includes William S. Burroughs, J.G. Ballard, Jack Kerouac, and John Updike. Somewhat out of place are thrillers by Thomas Harris and a few general-interest books on the occult including overviews by Colin Wilson and some Dover reprints of E.A. Wallis Budge's Egyptian works.

The computer holds little of significance other than saved bits of correspondence: mostly requests written to rare book dealers looking for such items as John Dee's *Necronomicon*, *The Book of Eibon*, and *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*. He apparently has had no success.

The Kitchen: Somewhat messy, this room betrays a bachelor never used to cleaning up much. A large freezer chest holds surprises. Below a few layers of frozen vegetables are the dismembered parts of a corpse—two arms and a torso, each packaged separately. Other cuts of meat individually wrapped may be rightly viewed with suspi-

cion. Witnessing the remains of the corpse is worth a Sanity loss of 1/1D4+1 points.

The unfortunate occupant of the freezer is one Daniel Kuhn, a former patient of van Dyson's. Van Dyson took him from the center a week ago (the staff believes he was released) and killed him with a lethal injection. He is now in the process of eating the body (rinsing and cooking carefully to remove the residue of the poison), making himself ready to adopt Kuhn's identity. He intends to live for a time as Kuhn, continuing to diagnose and analyze the now-dead man's condition.

Examining the refrigerator turns up several dishes of leftovers. All consist of meat from Kuhn's corpse prepared in a variety of ways. Much of the bulk van Dyson simply prepares as a liquid solution taken intravenously but the choicer cuts he savors in spicy dishes. A nearby file of index cards contains recipes for the consumption of different parts of the body. The one for broiled cerebellum stuffed with bread crumbs in a white sauce is marked with three stars. A plateful of this dish lies in the fridge, should the investigators wish to sample. Discovery of the recipes calls for a loss of 0/1D2 Sanity points.

The Master Bedroom: This room is furnished with items seemingly different from those found in the rest of the house. Oddly enough, it seems to be a facsimile of an entire apartment in scaled-down size. Rugs and furniture denote the entrance, bedroom, kitchen, etc., all within the limited space of the bedroom.

All of these furnishings came from Candice's apartment, which van Dyson has attempted to re-create here on a smaller scale. Having eaten his ex-wife as part of the *Consume Likeness* spell, van Dyson now spends hours here each week, flipping between the images of himself and Candice, holding long arguments between the two (both himself, of course) in a futile and increasingly-deranged attempt to learn why she left him. Should it come to this, any of Candice's neighbors or friends will recognize the furniture and layout of van Dyson's pseudo-apartment.

Van Dyson is away from home and at the clinic from 9 AM until 6 or 7 PM each weekday, during which time the house is left locked but unguarded. If by chance he is at home when the investigators surreptitiously enter, there is a 25% chance that van Dyson is in one of his Candice moods. He is in the master bedroom flipping between Candice and himself, arguing loudly. Investigators overhearing the argument may come to the erroneous conclusion that van Dyson is holding his ex-wife as an unwilling prisoner. If caught by surprise van Dyson appears before them as Candice, begging them to help her escape the doctor's evil clutches. He, of course, attempts to eliminate the investigators as soon as reasonably possible, either simply killing them or using his black magicks to mislead or misdirect the investigators in an attempt to get them arrested. *Cloud Memory* is the spell used to muddle their minds.

Finale

ONCE the investigators find out what van Dyson has been up to, they will most likely want to take the mad doctor out of the picture. The easiest way to accomplish this is to involve the police; once the cannibalistic activities of van Dyson are revealed, a thorough investigation of his patient records indict him in the murders of at least five more. The case of Candice Lee is trickier. Certain that she was killed by the doctor, the police will likely decide that either van Dyson managed to impersonate her, or hired someone else to do it for him.

But Van Dyson resists. If police come to his door he uses spells to send them away convinced that the doctor has provided irrefutable proof of his innocence. If necessary, he accompanies them back to the station and there uses his magicks to confuse their superiors. In any event van Dyson is cleared of suspicion and the authorities drop their investigation. The investigators will probably be forced to take matters into their own hands.

But before any of this comes to pass, Damon Newcomb has his own cards to play.

Newcomb's Plan

Newcomb wants his magical walking stick back, the cane lovingly charged with 68 magic points, the cane van Dyson stole from him. The item is hidden either at van Dyson's house or at the clinic, in a place known only to Newcomb and van Dyson. Details of its exact and secret location are left to the keeper.

Newcomb needs the investigators to get him out to van Dyson's property. Alone, his fear is too great and his capabilities too limited. He would like to accompany the investigators out there. Then, while they deal with van Dyson, slip away and retrieve his cane.

Once Newcomb has the cane he casts the spell *Call Azathoth*, expending enough magic points from the cane to guarantee success, then possibly using the rest to cast offensive spells or summon Dimensional Shamblers to attack anyone foolish enough to interfere with him. He does not directly attack van Dyson unless forced to. Newcomb wants the good doctor to live just a little while longer.

Newcomb does not attempt appeasement proceedings, intending to let the Outer God destroy as much of the area as It wishes. This devastation certainly includes all of the van Dyson and Belmont properties and, at the keeper's option, may even crawl over the mountains to visit itself upon the city of Samson itself.

The Eye of Azathoth

The first sign of Azathoth's approach is a sudden stillness that falls over the valley; all wildlife falls silent. Then a wind

stirs up and black clouds appear in the sky overhead. The clouds begin circling as the wind picks up, blowing about leaves and small twigs. The air grows thick and heavy, almost green, as the swirling clouds spin faster, lightning flashing between them. Then a shrill piping fills the air as a pore opens in the center of the racing clouds, revealing the reality beyond—the reality that is Azathoth.

A great shaft of sickly-green light lances down from the opening in the sky, blasting and desiccating several acres about a half mile from where the investigators stand. Flaming white balls of plasma, the apparent source of the screaming noise, spiral down out of the opening to circle the shaft before screaming into the woods, crashing in an eruption of flame. Bolts of lightning strike the ground.

All who witness the appearance of Azathoth and his servitors lose 1D3/1D20+2 Sanity points. Those driven insane panic and flee on foot, forgetting about vehicles. Those not insane will probably want to use a car to get out of the area. Those who choose to remain fall victim to the gaze of the Eye of Azathoth and die a quick, but painful death, withering under the gaze of the Outer God.

The pore continues to open and close, the shaft of light blasting and destroying whatever it touches as it drifts ominously nearer the investigators. Those who flee in vehicles can easily outdistance the drifting Eye of Azathoth but are still subject to dangers. Four Luck rolls are required to get out of the area. The first failed Luck roll indicates a near lightning strike. A huge bolt lashes down and strikes the road right in front of the speeding vehicle creating a small crater. A Drive roll is required to bypass the obstacle. A failure indicates the car has crashed into the hole causing each passenger 1D8 points of damage. The car can be pushed out if the investigators' combined STR can overcome the stuck car's resistance of 32.

A second failed Luck roll means that one of the flaming balls of fire lands near the speeding car. A plasmic, superheated servitor of the Outer Gods, this flaming creature crashes to earth just ahead of the investigators' car, appearing as a writhing heap of glowing, super-hot tentacles and pseudopods. A Drive roll is required to avoid crashing into the monster but the car goes off the road and gets stuck, forcing the investigators to flee on foot as the creature demolishes their vehicle. Further failed Luck rolls indicate additional encounters with Servitors.

Those on foot must make a like number of Luck rolls. A near lightning strike results in 1D8 points of damage, while an encounter with a Servitor, barring a successful Luck roll, probably results in death.

Azathoth remains for fifteen minutes, ranging up and down the valley, blasting massive areas of forest, and possibly even approaching Samson. Play this by ear; Azathoth is so monstrously huge that he almost always appears to be either directly overhead or quickly approaching the investigators. The servitors constitute a more personal threat. Use them at will; if the investigators are doing too well with their Luck rolls, call for Listen rolls to indicate that one is nearby. The investigators should, if at all possible, meet up with at least one Servitor. Wreck their vehicles. Blast the road. Don't forget that the forest will be burning, a massive blaze flaming out of control. Fire vehicles from Samson, Delilah, and other communities find their way blocked by flames and massive craters.

The destructive, chaotic fury of Azathoth leaves the valley a burned-out wreck. Surviving investigators should suffer an additional 1D3/1D6 SAN loss for the experience, although this should not induce any immediate insanity—assume the loss is spread out over the entire flight from the destruction.

Should any of the investigators survive the horrific vengeance of Damon Newcomb, their first sign of safety will be a CNN camera crew, hastily dispatched to get footage of the worst firestorm since Hiroshima. The reporters from CNN will, of course, approach the investigators and ask them hasty questions about their experience.

"How do you feel?"

Conclusion

If the investigators put a stop to Dr. Petroff van Dyson's hideous practices they receive a well deserved award of 1D10+2 Sanity points. If Damon Newcomb survived and was returned to the care of the California Mental Health Board they receive an additional 1D6 Sanity points. Finally, if they knew about the summoning of Azathoth and prevented it, they are eligible for a 2D10 Sanity point bonus. Candice Lee's parents reward them ($5000) if they expose van Dyson's murderous exploits to the police. Morty Belmont thanks them but has no money to dole out.

Statistics

Dr. Petroff van Dyson, age 46, gifted but insane psychologist

STR 12	CON 14	SIZ 13	INT 19	POW 19
DEX 13	APP 12	EDU 21	SAN 0	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 60%, 1D3+db; Grapple 55%; Pistol (9mm automatic) 45%, 1D10.

Skills: Accounting 35%, Anthropology 10%, Archaeology 10%, Astronomy 5%, Chemistry 85%, Credit Rating 75%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, Drive Automobile 45%, First Aid 45%, History 35%, Law 20%, Library Use 75%, Medicine 85%, Occult 40%, Pharmacy 90%, Psychoanalysis 90%, Psychology 90%, Talk Eruditely 100%.

Languages: English 105%, German 75%, Latin 35%, Russian 30%.

Spells: Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler, Shrivel, Dominate, Cloud Memory, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Voorish Sign

Items: Van Dyson has an enchanted cane that currently holds 68 magic points. He does not know how to re-charge it.

The Eye of Azathoth

Damon Newcomb, age 26, lost soul

STR 14	CON 15	SIZ 14	INT 16(6)*	POW 21
DEX 12	APP 8	EDU 21(6)*	SAN 0	HP 14

*numbers in parentheses reflect his outward abilities, reduced because of van Dyson's efforts.

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3+db; Switchblade 45%, 1D4+db.

Skills: Anthropology 35%, Archaeology 30%, Astronomy 45%, Chemistry 20%, Cthulhu Mythos 45%, History 60%, Library Use 45%, Occult 60%, Ramble Senselessly 80%

Languages: English 95% (30%)*, Spanish 15%.

Spells: Summon/Bind Byakhee, Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler, Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods, Call Azathoth, Shrivel, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Voorish Sign, Dominate, Cloud Memory, Enchant Item.

Notes: Because of Newcomb's lobotomy, a roll of POW x3 or less is required for him to successfully cast a spell. The magic, originating deep within him and bypassing the normal routes of thought is not in itself affected by the lobotomy. The ability to instigate a spell, however, is hampered. Of course, the keeper is welcome to assume automatic success or failure of any particular instance to serve dramatic purposes. Spells cast upon nonplayer characters (especially Hector Simõne) should probably succeed regardless.

Hector Simõne, age 24, unwitting pawn

STR 14	CON 12	SIZ 13	INT 16	POW 12
DEX 9	APP 10	EDU 18	SAN 45	HP 12

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3+db.

Skills: Chemistry 25%, History 30%, Library Use 65%, Psychology 45%, Resist Mind Control 5%.

Languages: Spanish 90%, English 75%.

Typical Orderly

STR 15	CON 14	SIZ 16	INT 14	POW 13
DEX 12	APP 11	EDU 14	SAN 60	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 70%, 1D3+db; Taser 55%, 1D3+CON resistance roll vs. 18 or unconscious.

Skills: Restrain Prisoner 75%, Wisecrack 55%.

Typical Servitor of the Outer Gods

STR 14	CON 17	SIZ 20	INT 18	POW 19
DEX 17	HP 19	Move 7		

Weapons: Tentacle 45%, 2D6.

Armor: None, but normal weapons can not harm a servitor. Magical weapons do normal damage. A servitor, additionally, regenerates 3 points of damage per round until dead.

Spells: All Servitors know at least 1D10 spells. In addition, they are capable of summoning at least one type of being by piping on their flutes. See rulebook for details.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D10 ■

This Fire Shall Kill

"For on that day all is right. The Tower of Gold shall become the Pillar of Fire and we shall give the call. Let mankind be cleansed by your power. Let the profane know, as we know, that on this day the fire shall burn so bright, burn into the memory of all men."

The Letters of Nestar

THIS scenario assumes the investigators are residents of San Francisco, California, and begins with the burning of one of their homes. It is quite likely that the investigators reside elsewhere. In this case the keeper may engineer a way for them to visit the city, and in this event it is a friend's house or hotel that burns down—wherever the investigators are currently residing. Another possibility is to have the investigators invited to San Francisco to look into the recent death of a young rookie fire fighter recently assigned to Robert Hardman's command. The rookie could be the son or nephew of a friend, relative, or even a stranger who has hired the investigators to look into the mysterious accident.

Perhaps the best idea is to move the scenario to the investigators' home town. This is accomplished easily enough, the only requirement being that the new city have at least one high-rise bank building. Simply ignore any references to the San Francisco fire of 1906.

Keeper's Information

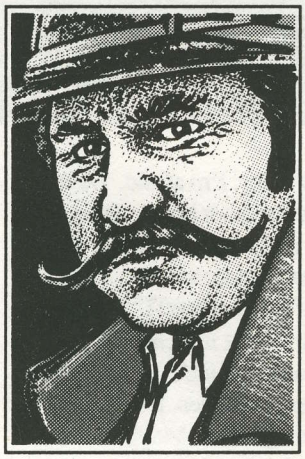
Robert Hardman, a lieutenant fire fighter with the San Francisco Fire Department is secretly a high priest of the fire god, Cthugha. His men, drugged and hypnotized for so long they have lost all reason, follow his every command. Together, using their knowledge of fire and the city, they have made a practice of regularly setting intentional blazes to honor their god. Invariably these flames devour the residents as well, fitting sacrifices to Cthugha. The scenario begins with the burning of one of the investigators' homes. Note that the actual location of Hardman's fire station is not given, allowing the keeper to place it where he will, most likely in the near vicinity of the investigators' domicile.

Robert Hardman

Robert Hardman is a third generation fire fighter, a twenty-year veteran respected for his courage and daring. More than one citizen owes his life to this man. But that was the Robert Hardman of the past. Five years ago he made the acquaintance of the former high priest of Cthugha, and soon after took up devotions to the fire god.

Long fascinated by fire, Hardman was taught to worship and love it, rather than fight it. The lieutenant still performs his duties, and in all outward respects is the same man he always was, brave and fearless. But the secret Robert Hardman is an arsonist and a killer, a follower of an alien god, a man who intends to soon destroy all of the city in a grand and frightful holocaust.

Hardman and his men are responsible for a number of fatal fires, choosing their victims from lists of innocent people subscribing to the city's free fire extinguisher inspection service. Sneaking into these homes under the cover of darkness the firemen quickly overcome the tenants, prepare them for sacrifice, then summon fire vampires to raze the house. Before vacating the premises, the cultists loot whatever jewelry and cash is on hand.



Robert Hardman

Most of these fires are set in the same district as Hardman's firehouse, Station 1081, often allowing the arsonist fire fighters to be the first on the scene. Other fires are occasionally set in different districts, in order to allay suspicion.

Investigators' Information

The investigators arrive home one evening to find their house burned, completely gutted, a black bare husk. Fire trucks and police cars, lights flashing, surround the scene. Neighbors peer from porches and from across the street, and Hardman's crew is there, watering the still-steaming ashes.

A police officer approaches and asks the investigators if they are residents of the building.

"The firemen say it started in your neighbors' house, then spread to your place."

Although probably no bodies were found in the ruins of the investigator's home, the officer carefully questions them to make sure.

Burn Injuries

Burn injuries are different from other types of injuries: more painful, slower to heal, and subject to infection. Keepers should use the following as a guideline to assessing burn injuries suffered by investigators. Particular instances of injury will have to be judged individually.

- **First Degree Burns:** The least form, suffered by anyone taking 1-4 points of burn damage in a single injury. Characterized by a reddening of the skin, stinging pain, and slight swelling—a sunburn is a first degree burn. Healing takes about a week, and is aided by burn creams or other precautions taken against drying of the skin.
- **Second Degree Burns:** Anyone taking 5-8 points of damage from a burn injury probably suffers second degree burns. The skin is blistered and swollen, peeling off in layers after the blisters break. Bandages are necessary to guard against infection. Recovery time is about two weeks.
- **Third Degree Burns:** Injuries of 9-12 points of damage cause third degree burns. The entire thickness of skin is destroyed as well as parts of the deeper muscle structure. Nerve endings are damaged, sometimes destroyed—the worst cases of third degree burns are those where the victim feels no pain. Recovery time is four to six weeks, with some hospital time almost guaranteed. Risk of secondary infections is great. Scarring is severe and may lead to a loss of APP points.
- **Fourth Degree Burns:** Any injury resulting in excess of 12 points of damage causes fourth degree burns. The affected portion of the body is charred and burnt including fat, muscle, and bones. Amputation of the limb is the only treatment. Recovery time is long and painful, taking months. Losses of APP, STR, DEX, and CON points may be indicated.

"Your neighbors weren't so lucky, I'm afraid. We found the body of a man and woman in the other house. The people across the street identified the residents as a Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Wilmont, in their fifties. Supposed to own a pawnshop in the city. Do you know if that's correct?"

Questioning the officer gains little information, but he says that a report will be filed and available in a few days, should they need it for insurance purposes. He gives them a card with the name Officer Charles Maples and the phone number of the local precinct.

Looking for Clues

The fire fighters, finished with their work, begin to pack up the trucks. Investigators may question them but they have little to offer in the way of theories about what started the blaze.

"Whatever it was," says Phil Watson, "it went up quick. Your neighbor wasn't storing chemicals, was he?"

The investigators are warned to be careful prowling about the ashes and then the fire fighters leave.

Neighbors appear, offering their sympathy and a couple flashlights. Although the devastation looks pretty thorough, something of value might be salvaged.

The remains are still hot and any investigator not taking proper precautions runs the risk of burns, or possibly impaling their foot on an exposed nail. Stepping over smoldering beams, molten globs of plastic that were formerly TVs and stereos, investigators may discover hot metal objects such as cutlery and tools waiting to injure them. Anyone picking up such objects without taking proper precautions suffers a minor burn of 1D2 damage points.

During the search ask each investigator for one or two DEX x5 rolls, depending on how long they spend tramping through the ruins. Failure indicates an investigator has tripped and fallen face first into hot coals, or broken their fall with hands on a red hot metal plate or crushed appliance, either accident causing 1D4 points of damage.

The keeper shall determine which, if any, of the investigator's belongings might be salvaged. In any event there shouldn't be much.

Investigators looking for the cause of the fire might search the Wilmonts' property next door. Electrical Repair rolls rule out the wiring; proper use of Chemistry rolls find no trace of accelerants. However, some of the remaining walls show odd scorch marks, curving trails resembling spray paint graffiti.

Spot Hidden rolls made while searching the Wilmonts' property turn up two items of note. One, found along the boundary of the property, is what remains of some odd facial shawl or cloth mask, apparently attached to the head by a metal band. Although the cloth is scorched a symbol of some kind is still discernible painted on the fabric. It is a flaming fireball surrounded by three concentric circles.

The second object, a partially burned hollow wooden cone, is carved with strange designs. An Idea roll identifies it as a torch-bearing device.

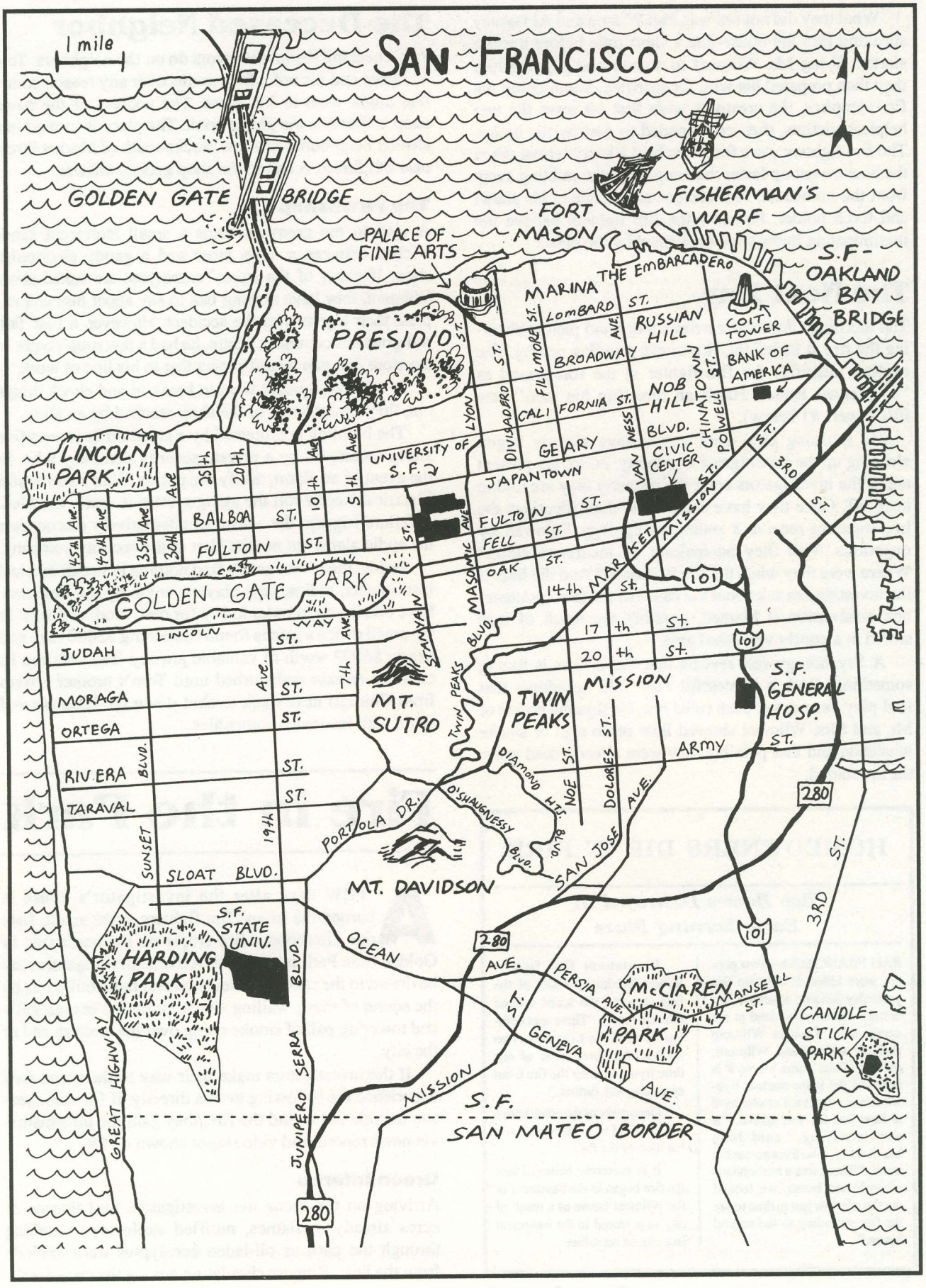
This cotton face shawl is a ceremonial device worn by the Cthugha worshipers intended to prevent them from polluting Cthugha's air with their mortal breath. The torch is used in conjunction with the spell they use to summon fire vampires. Natural History determines that it is made of sandalwood. A Cthulhu Mythos roll easily determines the probable function of the torch but the symbol on the shawl remains mysterious. A successful Anthropology or Occult roll suggests it might be connected with fire worship.

Researching this topic in a library Should provide investigators with bits from the boxed essay *Cults of Fire* on page 39.

The Neighbors

Although eyewitnesses to the event, the neighbors have little useful to offer.

"It was so sudden. Whoosh! Up went the house, huge flames and sparks leaping up through the air. Then, boom! Your house went too. Then the Fire Department showed up. They did what they could for the Wilmonts but. . ." Tears well up. "Such good people. How horrible," etc.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SAN FRANCISCO
N
GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE
FORT MASON
FISHERMAN'S WARF
PALACE OF FINE ARTS
THE EMBARCADERO
S.F.-OAKLAND BAY BRIDGE
MARINA
LOMBARD ST.
RUSSIAN HILL
COIT TOWER
PRESIDIO
BROADWAY
BANK OF AMERICA
FILLMORE ST.
CALIFORNIA ST.
NOB HILL
CHINATOWN
POWELL ST.
LINCOLN PARK
LYON ST.
DIVISADERO ST.
GEARY BLVD.
VAN NESS
CIVIC CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF S.F.
JAPANTOWN
MISSION ST.
3RD ST.
FULTON ST.
FELL ST.
OAK ST.
MASONIC AVE.
MARKET ST.
14th St.
17th St.
20th St.
101
GOLDEN GATE PARK
LINCOLN WAY
JUDAH
MORAGA
ORTEGA
RIVIERA BLVD.
TARAVAL
SUNSET BLVD.
STANYAN
MT. SUTRO
TWIN PEAKS BLVD.
TWIN PEAKS
MISSION
S.F. GENERAL HOSP.
DIAMOND HTS BLVD.
DOLORES ST.
ARMY ST.
NOE ST.
O'SHAUGHNESSY Blvd.
PORTOLA DR.
SAN JOSE AVE.
280
MT. DAVIDSON
S.F. STATE UNIV.
HARDING PARK
OCEAN AVE.
PERSIA AVE.
McCLAREN PARK
MANSELL ST.
CANDLESTICK PARK
GENEVA AVE.
MISSION ST.
GREAT HIGHWAY
JUNIPERO SERRA BLVD.
S.F.
SAN MATEO BORDER

What they did not see was Phil Watson and Al Darvey sneaking into the house just a short time before the fire started. Tying Mr. Wilmont to a chair and gagging him they then prepared his wife for sacrifice. Summoning the fire vampires, the creatures were first set upon the two helpless victims, then commanded to destroy the house. The fire fighters were forced to beat a hasty retreat when the house went up faster than expected. Scrambling away from the holocaust, Phil accidentally dropped his shawl and torch holder. For now the fire fighters believe the incriminating items were consumed by the blaze.

The Next Day

The morning *Chronicle* carries a story and picture showing the fire at its height, fire trucks standing nearby. The caption identifies the fire fighter in the foreground as "Lieutenant Robert Hardman directing his men" (see Fire Papers #1 below).

By morning city work crews have already begun cleaning up the investigator's property. Police are present and if the investigators enter the property they are told to keep off. Once they have established their identities the investigators receive a mumbled apology followed by questions. Will they be making an insurance claim? Where were they when the fire happened? And the like. If the investigators ask about the cause of the fire, spontaneous combustion is blamed, possibly the result of rags stored in a poorly ventilated area.

A Psychology roll reveals that the officer is hiding something. With a successful Fast Talk he admits that foul play has not yet been ruled out. He says the bodies of Mr. and Mrs. Wilmont showed little or no sign of smoke inhalation and that possibly they were already dead when the fire started.

HOMEOWNERS DIE IN FIRE

Two Homes Destroyed in Early Evening Blaze

SAN FRANCISCO—Two people were killed in a tragic fire yesterday that also destroyed two homes. Pronounced dead at the scene were Thomas Wilmont and his wife, Edna Wilmont, owners of the home where it is believed the blaze started. Eyewitnesses expressed amazement at how fast the fire spread. "It was terrifying," said John Landsdown, who lives across the street. "There was a tremendous whoosh and boom, we looked out the window just in time to see the fire spreading to the second house."

Lieutenant fire fighter Robert Hardman, leader of the first crew on the scene echoed that statement. "There was nothing we could do to save the two houses. We spent most of our time trying to keep the fire from spreading any further."

Occupants of the other house are believed to have been out at the time of the fire.

It is currently believed that the fire began in the basement of the Wilmont house as a result of oily rags stored in the basement in a closed container.

The Fire Papers #1

The Deceased Neighbor

Any checking the investigators do on the neighbors, Tom Wilmont and his wife, fails to discover any reason someone might want to kill them. The address of the pawn shop is found in the phone book. The place is located in a shabby neighborhood a few blocks south of Market Street near 8th Street. A call to the shop gets no answer.

The Pawnshop

A visit to the premises finds a small storefront sandwiched between a news store and a gaudy electronics shop. If either of the stores' employees are asked about Wilmont, they have nothing bad to say about him and express their regrets over the accident. However, a Fast Talk roll gains this comment: "Sure, he had a few rough types in the store, but you would expect that in his line of work."

If the investigators want to break in and check things out, they find the rear of the shop reached by an alley.

The building is protected by a standard heat-sensitive alarm monitored by a private security company who, in the event of an alarm, notify the police. With a successful Electrical Repair roll the aging system is easily disabled. A failure triggers the alarm, or alternatively disconnects the audio alarm but not the alert to the security company.

Inside, the investigators find nothing unusual: musical instruments, radios, tape players, anything the desperate have offered up in order to pay for rent, food, or drugs. In the small office a safe is found containing $3000 cash and nearly $6000 worth of valuable jewelry. The safe and its contents remain undisturbed until Tom's brother arrives from Chicago next week to shut down the business and settle with insurance companies.

Fire in the Park

A FEW days after the investigator's house is burned the insane fire fighters strike again. Late one afternoon a fire erupts on the north side of Golden Gate Park around 10th Avenue. Investigators may be drawn to the scene by television and radio bulletins, by the sound of many wailing sirens, or by the orange glow and towering pall of smoke rising over the western end of the city.

If the investigators make their way to the scene they experience the following events directly. If for some reason they do not attend the fire, they gain the information via news reports and video tapes shown on TV.

Green Inferno

Arriving on the scene the investigators find dozens of acres already in flames, muffled explosions booming through the park as oil-laden eucalyptus trees explode from the heat. Rumors circulating among the crowd indi-

cate that several people—mostly homeless people living in the park—have been killed. Another rumor, unverified, says the fire was intentionally set.

All roads leading to the area are blocked and fire equipment is parked everywhere, hoses snaking underfoot.

Ragged, dirty forms intermittently stumble out of the park, displaced homeless, joggers, and others. Many are loaded into ambulances and whisked off. Others receive first aid treatment at the scene. A group of hippies fleeing the fire push through the crowd towards the investigators. A staggering, dread-locked fiend in scorched T-shirt and baggy pants stumbles into them. The refugee clutches at an investigator, his eyes wild with fear.

"The fire man, geez it was alive, Oh my God it was alive, it went after her, man, holy shit it went after her like it was a living thing. Went after her, entered her and..."

Remembering the event he screams then pushes himself away, disappearing into the crowd. Friends following after him apologize as they hurry by. "Sorry man, but the fire killed his girl."

The fire rages on through the night. Although police and fire fighters order civilians out of the area, if the investigators wish to sneak into the park, it should not be too difficult; its borders are long and unfenced. Inside the park investigators run the risk of death or injury, or even possible arrest should they be discovered by police. Ask for occasional Sneak and Hide rolls to escape the attention of authorities. While they explore the burning park, the keeper is free to stage any sort of encounter he chooses, or even to trap the investigators within the flames. Escape should be difficult and it may be that they are eventually rescued by Robert Hardman and his crew.

Otherwise, the keeper should allow them to eventually stumble upon Hardman and the men of the 1081st. The lieutenant sits in a support vehicle talking on a two-way radio. If the investigators have some means of monitoring the transmission they find it innocent, multiple orders given and received in the line of duty. Robert and his crew remain on the job most of the night, the flames finally being brought under control shortly before midnight.

No matter how long the investigators watch the crew, nor how many blackened and burnt acres they search, the investigators find nothing suspicious.

Cults of Fire

If the investigators conduct research into fire cults at the library, a successful Library Use roll discovers a book, *The Worshipers of Fire*, written in 1912 by Sydney Bowman. The book discusses many aspects of fire worship from primitive to modern, including druids, south sea islanders, and others. One section is devoted to Zoroastrianism, a Persian religion founded in the 6th or 7th century B.C. and which worships fire as a holy symbol. The religion makes use of the concentric circle motif.

The Cult of Nestar

Briefly mentioned is the cult of Nestar Mobedan Mobed, a self-proclaimed prophet and Zoroastrian fundamentalist. Living during the 6th century AD, Nestar denounced the materialism of the wealthy priestly class and, with a small band of followers, disappeared into the wilderness. Twenty years later, when the Nestarians were forgotten and thought lost, Nestar led down from the mountains a rag-tag army of men who attacked the city, setting much of it to the torch. Before they could reach the palace—which they called the Tower of Gold—and raze it, they were counter-attacked by the city guard and routed. Nestar was among those killed. It was generally believed that the cult soon after died out.

But the cult did not die out. Those who survived kept the worship alive, maintaining in secret their practices, rituals, and sacrifices. The line of high priests was preserved, handed down generation to generation, unbroken to the present day. The Mobed, as he is known to his followers, leads the rites and is responsible for the safekeeping of the liturgies contained in a book called *The Letters of Nestar*, the hand-written testimony of the original mad prophet.

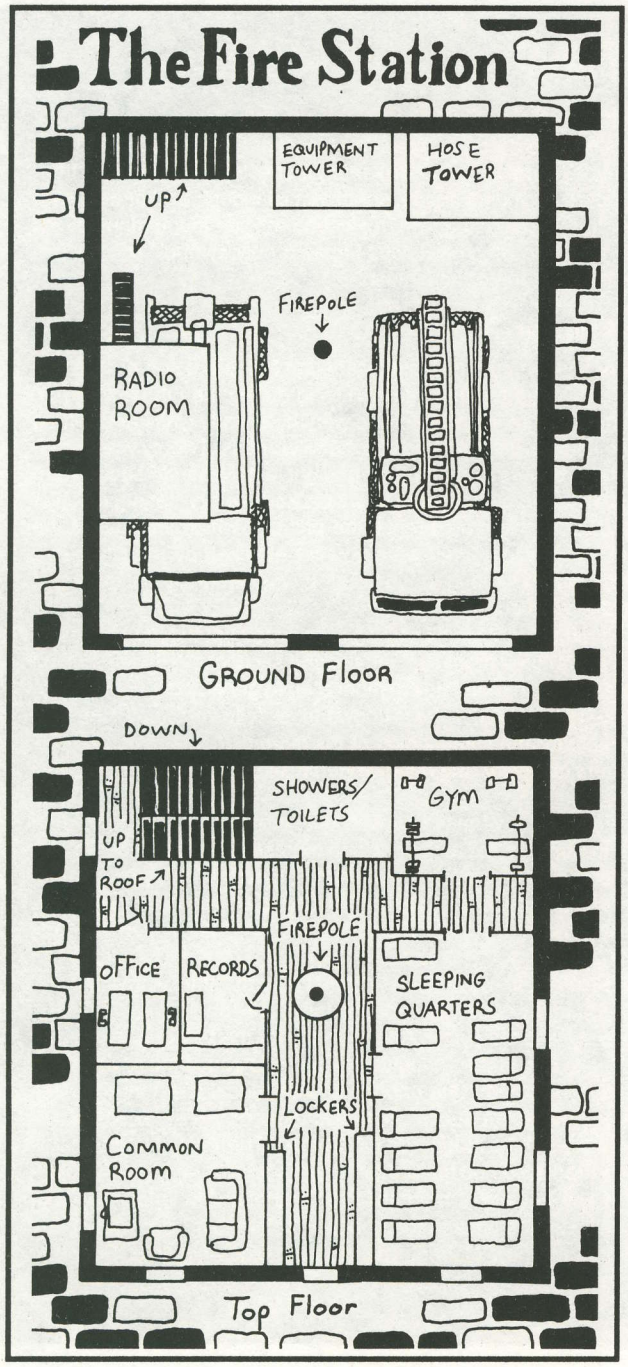
The cult remained in what is now Iran until the mid-18th century when they migrated to Bombay, India, there losing themselves among the Parsee population—Zoroastrian refugees driven from Persia by the Moslems. Years later the Mobed emigrated to England, and one of his descendants to America, finally bringing the *Letters of Nestar* to San Francisco in the early years of the 20th century.

As foretold in the *Letters*, 1906 was the first year the stars would be right, the year that Cthugha could be brought forth and unleashed upon the unholy, the greedy, and the evil. In April of that year the Mobed prepared all that was needed to bring forth Cthugha. His plans to engulf the city in flame were only partly thwarted by the unpredicted earthquake of that morning. Although Cthugha was not successfully summoned, the hundreds of fire vampires that were set the staggered city ablaze. Three days later most of downtown San Francisco had burned to the ground.

Not told in any book, this man still lives, although no longer the high priest of the cult. He has passed the honor on to another, a younger man, Robert Hardman, the new Mobed. The old man bides his time. Soon the stars will be right again.

That evening and the throughout the next day news services report that at least five people were killed in Golden Gate park fire including a rookie fire fighter from the 1741st station house. All evidence now indicates that the fire was intentionally set and a police investigation is under way.

Later it is announced that a memorial service will be conducted for the slain fire fighter, to be held on the plaza in front of City Hall at 1 P.M.. Burial will be in Colma, a small city south of San Francisco whose principle industry is cemeteries.



Robert Hardman

IT is likely investigators will wish to do some checking up on Robert Hardman's background. Although personnel records containing personal information are confidential, many other records can be checked by visiting Fire Department headquarters near City Hall. Besides the administration and executive offices, the arson investigation unit also works out of this building.

Successful Library Use rolls reveal the following:

- ☐ Robert Hardman joined the department as a rookie 22 years ago.
- ☐ Hardman has three times received citations from the department for bravery and has twice been credited with saving a person's life at great risk to himself.
- ☐ Hardman made lieutenant twelve years ago and was shortly after transferred to the 1081st.
- ☐ Careful cross-checking shows that a somewhat higher number of fatal fires have taken place in the 1081st's district in the last five years—a number high enough to raise suspicion if anyone had ever taken the time to compare. Further checking shows that the vast majority of these fires took place during periods when Hardman's crew was on duty. Discerning these patterns takes at least one entire day of researching.

Newspapers

Examining back issues of the *Chronicle* and *Examiner* find a few stories involving Hardman and the 1081st. One in particular, dated over five years ago, credits Hardman with saving the life of an aged man trapped in a burning hotel in the Mission district. Both Hardman and the rescued man suffered severe burns but were otherwise in good condition. Photo portraits show the men in their hospital beds: a smiling Hardman giving a 'thumbs-up' to the camera and an old, wrinkled man, possibly of Arab or other Eastern extraction. It was this rescue that earned Hardman his second citation.

The Station House

At some point the investigators may wish to visit the station. It is located in a part of the city near the investigators' past domicile and, of course, open 24 hours a day. It is alternately manned by two different crews, Hardman's and another, on 72-hour shifts. Which shift is on duty when the investigators visit should be decided by the keeper. The building is three stories high, sandwiched between residences of flats. The front doors are usually open and fire fighters can be seen moving about within.

Ground Floor: The ceiling here is two stories high, allowing for the equipment racks, hose drying towers, etc. The company's two trucks, a pumper and a ladder truck fitted with an articulated boom are parked at the two front doors. A flight of metal stairs leads to a glass-enclosed radio room elevated above the floor at about the level of a second story. The radio is manned 24 hours a day. Considerable amounts of time are spent caring for equipment and trucks and more often than not several fire fighters are found on the ground floor engaged in such activities.

Top Floor: Three stories above the street, this floor is given over to living quarters, bunks, and kitchen. For three days the fire crews live, work, and eat together. Everyone takes their turn preparing meals, Hardman us-

ing the opportunity to administer doses of the drug he's long-used to keep fire fighters subject to his will.

Talking with the Fire Fighters

Speaking with the alternate company brings little information. None of the men have any reason to suspect their counterparts. If the investigators visit when Hardman's crew is on duty they are quickly recognized as victims of the recent house fire. Friendly hellos and sympathies are offered but the visit makes the cultists suspicious. Any attempts to open conversation are met with cordially, but Hardman takes the opportunity to establish what address the victim is now staying at as well as possibly gaining the names and addresses of the other investigators.

Sneaking Around the Station

Investigators might wish to sneak into the firehouse, most likely after an alarm has been sounded and most of the fire fighters are out on a run. At least one fire fighter is always left at the station to man the radio room. Sneaking up to the top floor by way of the stairs exposes investigators to possible discovery by whomever is stationed in the radio room, requiring numerous Sneak and Hide rolls. The fire pole is partly concealed by the fire truck parked on the ground floor and might be used to reach the upper floor. A Climb roll is needed to scale the pole, a failure indicating a slip and a failed Luck roll meaning the slip has caused a loud screeching noise. Whoever is in the control room investigates.

Little can be discovered upstairs unless the investigators are willing to break into the fire fighters' lockers lining the walls near the dormitory. If lockers belonging to Hardman's company are broken, they are found to contain cotton face shawls identical to the burned one possibly found at the original fire. Sandalwood torch holders are also in abundance.

Inside Hardman's locker the investigators find a shawl, two torch holders, and a large glass vial half-filled with a brownish powder. Proper analysis and a Chemistry roll determine that the drug is opium-based, but also contains a number of complex organic compounds difficult to define. Hardman uses the drug to soften the wills of new men assigned to his company, making them susceptible to the hypnotic suggestions he uses to convert them to Cthugha worship. All the men in his company have so long been converted that they are truly insane. Dedicated to Cthugha, they require no further encouragement. Hardman keeps a supply of the drug handy in case he has to convert a new rookie. The drug is not foolproof. Last year Hardman was forced to kill a new fire fighter who, after resisting the lieutenant's hypnotic influence, was close to blowing the whistle on the cultists. Hardman made the man's death during a fire appear as though an accident.

If caught in the act of breaking and entering most likely the police are called and the investigators placed under arrest. If Hardman and his followers have already identified the investigators as trouble-makers, they may try to take them captive, sacrificing them later in their secret temple behind Hardman's house on Twin Peaks.

The Memorial Service

THE public service for the rookie killed fighting the fire in Golden Gate Park is held at Civic Center plaza next to City Hall on a sunny weekday afternoon. If the investigators do not attend they may read about it in the paper or see video-taped portions on the evening news.

The Visit

Not long after coming under Hardman's suspicion the investigators suffer an attack, the actual time and place to be determined by the keeper. Two fire vampires are sent to the residence of one of the investigators with orders to burn and destroy. These entities come bursting through a window or bring the door down in a fiery heap. The vampires attack the closest target or, unpredictable as they are, begin setting papers, furniture, and curtains ablaze.

If the investigator has a fire extinguisher handy he may have a chance against the creatures. If rooming in a hotel an Idea roll reminds the investigator that an extinguisher is available out in the hallway not far from the door. Although all hotels are equipped with automatic sprinkler systems, it does not trigger. Later it is found to have been mysteriously turned off by persons unknown. If they are in a private home other than their own, their is a 20% chance the tenant keeps an extinguisher on the premises.

If the investigators don't dispatch the fire minions quickly they run the risk of their accommodations being razed around them with the possibility of having to explain what happened to police.

The fire vampires probably try and position themselves between the investigators and any exits. Should the investigators escape, or make a run for it, the creatures do not follow but turn their attentions to burning the place furiously before leaving the scene. Their erratic, weaving flight patterns leave walls marked with scorch trails similar to those found at the ruins of the Wilmont house.

Two Fire Vampires

CON	SIZ	INT	POW	DEX	HP
7	1	12	14	15	7
8	1	13	15	16	8

Move: 11

Weapon: Touch 85%, 2D6 fire damage plus magic point drain.

Armor: Unharmed by material weapons.

■

The service is attended by a crowd of about five hundred people. Lieutenant Hardman takes a turn at the microphone and gives a moving speech about the young recruit's dedication to his job, what a fine man he was, and what a loss the Department has suffered.

Although the crowd may make the investigators feel anonymous, if the cultists suspect them they are spotted by some of Hardman's men and their presence made known. Hardman finishes his eulogy saying that the man will remain as an example to all those who knew him. "His life was not wasted but serves as an example to others." Only if the investigators suspect Hardman, and only if they make an Idea roll do they recognize this double-edged statement as a possible warning.

If the investigators have not yet made the fire fighters' acquaintance and choose to do so now, they receive much the same treatment as described in the Station House section. Again, the suspicious fire fighters take the opportunity to establish the investigators' names and addresses.

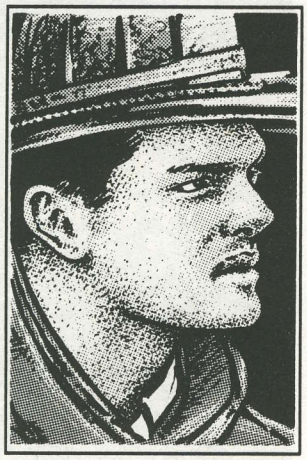
It is possible that when the investigators leave the service, Hardman orders two of his men dressed in street clothes to follow them—particularly if there is still a question about where the investigators are living. If the players state they are watching to see if they are followed, allow a Spot Hidden roll to notice the men shadowing them. If the men following realize they have been spotted, they quickly turn off and try to lose themselves in the streets.

If by chance the investigators should capture one of these men, he is found to be carrying no identification. He does not admit to anything and at the first opportunity attempts to summon a fire vampire to attack his captors.

Some Help?

The keeper should stage the following event after the fire at Golden Gate Park, whenever it seems most appropriate. A phone call comes from Steve Willows, a second-year fire fighter from Station House 1333. "I saw you at the memorial [or other appropriate place]. They're on to you, they want you destroyed, I heard them talking. I've got something to show you, something weird. Come to my place tonight. 29 Balfour Road in the Mission. Gotta go."

Steve has overheard things said by Hardman confirming suspicions he carries regarding the death of a friend—a fellow rookie—in a fire last year. The rookie had only shortly before been assigned to duty with Hardman and his 1081st. He has made a practice of checking up on Hardman and a few days ago captured some of his activities in Golden Gate Park on video tape.



Steve Willows

The Video

The video was taken during the Golden Gate Park fire and shows three fire fighters standing in a well-wooded section of the park. Their faces are concealed by familiar cotton shawls and they are engaged in the act of summoning fire vampires using the sandalwood torches. As the tape rolls viewers see fire vampires periodically winking into existence to be lovingly handled and caressed by the cultists before being turned loose in the park. The tape is shadowy and dark, and before long clouded by smoke.

If the investigators think to get the video enhanced (a Photography roll brings this to mind) they have little trouble finding a production facility capable of doing the work. When the enhanced version is viewed a day or two later investigators find they can make out much more detail, including the familiar design decorating the shawls. But most importantly the names marked on the back of the fire fighter's coats: Hardman, Watson, and O'Connor.

Willows' Apartment

Willows' home is easy to locate. The street is quiet, a wind blowing through the rubbish gathering in heaps by the curb. Willows' residence is a typical three-story stucco building with a flat on each of the upper floors and a small studio apartment and garage on the ground level. As the investigators approach, a Spot Hidden roll reveals a faint, orange glow coming from a third story window.

Ringing Willows' doorbell brings no response. A Listen roll reveals muffled screams of pain coming from somewhere up the stairway beyond the iron-grill exterior door. This door is secured with a solenoid-operated latch but can be wrenched open by applying as many as two investigators' combined STRs against the door's STR of 18. A dash up the stairway brings the investigators to Willows' flat (his second story neighbors are out for the evening). This door is also locked, STR 14.

Fire Fight

The door opens to reveal a badly burned Steve Willows furiously swinging an emptied fire extinguisher at a darting, sizzling fire vampire. The creature zips in, burns the man's leg, then darts back out of reach. Willows screams in pain and the fire vampire, seeing its chance, flies straight into his mouth and down his throat. Willows chokes, drops the extinguisher and clutches his chest, then explodes outward, his super-heated blood and flesh bursting out into the room, spattering the investigators. The fire vampire, freed of its human cage, flies to the fireplace and disappears up the chimney. Those viewing this hideous scene lose 1/1D6 Sanity points.

Patches of the hardwood floor are burned and the walls marked by the telltale weaving scorch marks left by fire vampires. A strong odor of burnt flesh lingers in the air; what's left of Willows' body still smolders.

A search of the room turns up several things of interest. Inside a backpack lying on the couch is a video tape and a piece of paper with a couple addresses and some notes scratched on it. The video tape is labeled "Golden Gate Fire—Enhancement?" One of the addresses is marked "Hardman" and is found in an exclusive neighborhood in the Twin Peaks district. The other is unidentified but located in the old warehouse section a few blocks south of Market Street. Beneath the addresses is what appears to be a book title, *Worshipers of Fire*, and a series of three dates followed by "525 C.? Tower of Gold?" The dates are those of the next three days.

Before leaving the flat an Idea roll takes note of a band scanner on a nearby table. Willow used it to keep track of fire activities around the city. Investigators might wish to obtain one of these useful devices, perhaps even borrowing the one they've found here.

The Warehouse

IF the address south of Market street is checked out it is found to be a large, brick warehouse, like many others in the area empty and abandoned. Most doors are sealed with heavy chains and padlocks but a tour of the outside finds a back door that has been broken open.

Inside is dark and dirty, the concrete floor littered with debris. A search of the building requires illumination but first investigators' attention is drawn to a flickering light radiating down from somewhere atop a nearby stairway.

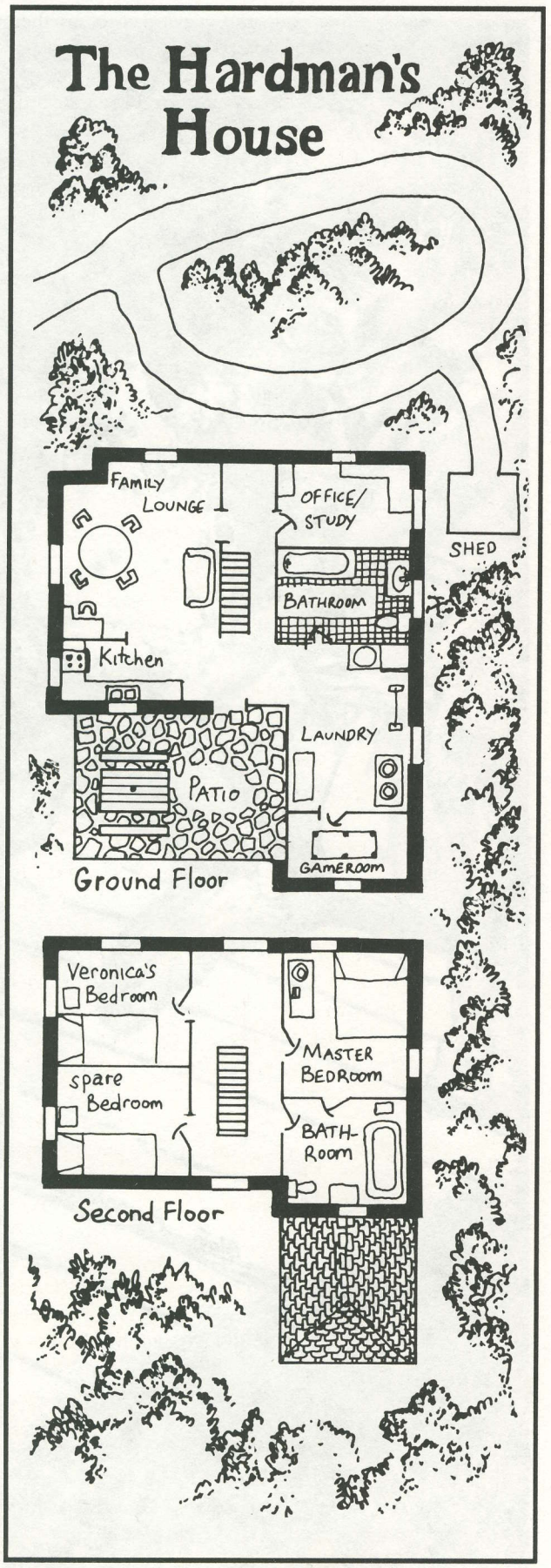
The stairs lead to a second floor row of rudely built offices; the glowing, pulsing light comes from one of these particle board cubicles. Looking in, the investigators find an ancient man, clad only in ragged trousers, sitting on the floor. A glowing fire vampire dances nimbly over his fingertips. The man pays little attention to intruders, content to amuse himself with his fiery plaything.

The man looks old, perhaps a hundred years or more. His frame is emaciated, his teeth and hair gone. Most terribly, his body is covered by burn scars, some old, some more recent. The scene costs investigators 1/1D3 Sanity points.

The Old Mobed

An Anthropology roll indicates the man originates from somewhere in the near or middle east, possibly Iran. Anyone who saw the newspaper photos of the old man Hardman rescued several years ago recognizes the individual in front of them as one and the same.

The old Mobed passes the flame



"You've come looking for him, I imagine," says the old man, not looking up, his attention riveted on the sizzling fire vampire skittering across his outstretched palms. "I am not he any longer. He is not here. My time is come and I will pass."

The old man's speech is disjointed, difficult to understand. A Psychology roll confirms him totally insane.

As the investigators watch, the man holds his outstretched arms together, straight out in front of him, palms up, and allows the fire vampire to roll down them to nestle against his chest. The air fills with the stench of burning flesh as the fire vampire burns and blisters through skin and meat. The man closes his eyes, tilting his head back in ecstasy and pain.

"Soon shall end the tower of gold in a pillar of fire! What I tried to do in 1906, he would it again. The stars are right now, the stars were right then!" And with that the fire vampire leaps down the man's throat and destroys him in an eruption of flame and viscera. Witnesses lose 1/1D4 Sanity points. If left unchecked, the fire vampire than proceeds to set the building afire beginning with the piles of rubbish heaped around the offices. With flames quickly spreading, the investigators may have to flee for their lives. With luck they will not be spotted fleeing the burning warehouse.

Hardman's Home

ROBERT Hardman's house is situated on a remote wooded lot high atop Twin Peaks. Residents of the city know the Twin Peaks area to be an expensive place to live and an Idea roll makes them wonder how a man on a fire fighters salary can afford the neighborhood. Investigators who attempt to learn more about this anomaly hear a story about an inheritance left the lieutenant by an aunt, enough to allow him to buy this place. This, of course, is a falsehood spread by Hardman. If the investigators drive up there they find the house near the top of the 800-foot peak, secluded and surrounded by pines.

Only one neighbor has a view of the Hardman house, a youngish couple who admit to not having much contact with the family on the hill. Their daughter, eight-year-old Debbie, says that "Mr. Hardman's a Fire Chief, I think," with some admiration. Their ten-year-old son, Todd, blurts out: "Veronica's a meany, I don't like her at all. She's always picking on kids at school." The father, Mike Thomas, puts a hand on Todd's shoulder. ""That's enough from you son." He explains that Veronica is the Hardman's ten-year-old daughter, a difficult child with a reputation for not getting along with others.

The family can't offer much more in the way of information except to remark that the Hardmans occasionally hold gatherings at the house, usually inviting ten or fifteen guests. "I think they're all fire fighters too," smiles Mike. "The guys he works with, I guess."

Only if the investigators visit late at night do they catch Hardman at home. If they find him there he feigns cordial but stays wary. If suspicious of the investigators and given any chance at all, he tucks a .38 automatic inside his clothing before answering the door to them. It should be noted that even if the investigators capture or kill Hardman in an encounter at his home, the great summoning that concludes this adventure will be staged anyway. Fire fighter Phil Watson will act as high priest and the keeper is within his rights to stage the event this very night, ready to begin within an hour or two. A dying or captured Hardman may spill the beans to the investigators, sending them on a race across town in an effort to stop the cultists. But most likely the investigators do not encounter Hardman.

A visit during the day or early evening hours finds the carport empty and the house apparently unoccupied. The investigators have no reason to suspect that the Hardmans have left their ten year old daughter home alone.

The House

Living Room/Lounge: This open area contains a dining table, couches, and a kitchen. The furniture is modern, and a large entertainment system occupies one wall. On top of a cabinet are Hardman's awards along with several photos of him and his men in action. Abstract paintings decorate the walls. The artist's signature is indecipherable but the style could best be described as Monet on acid, in Hell. Two chunky bits of black polished rock ornament a table top. A Geology roll identifies them as volcanic slag.

The Study: This room contains a large wooden desk with inlaid leather writing surface and matching chair situated in front of a large window overlooking the front yard. The walls are covered by large shelves housing books, pictures, and personal effects. A good many of the books are fire-related and include Fire Department manuals, case histories, historical texts, and a copy of *Worshipers of Fire*.

Examining the floor, a Spot Hidden indicates a very faint square cut into the carpet under the desk. Removing the square of carpet reveals a floor safe with an electronic code word combination lock with a mini keypad and LED display. The correct entry (Fahrenheit 451) opens the lock. Overriding the lock requires a successful Electronics roll. Breaking the safe open requires hours.

Inside is $1100 cash, a few personal papers, and a cloth bag containing ceremonial shawls and a crumbling, antique codex. An Archaeology or Linguistics roll identifies the writing in the ancient book as Pahlavi (Middle Persian), circa 6th century AD. The codex is titled *The Letters of Nestar*. If the investigators read this book they lose 1D8 Sanity points and add 6 percentiles to their Cthulhu Mythos score. The book contains the spells *Summon/Bind Fire Vampire, Call/Dismiss Cthugha, Enchant Torch,* and *Draught of Phan*, the latter a formula for the drug used by Hardman. These spells have a multiplier of x2.

Found at the bottom of the safe is a transparent plastic covered switch marked "Temple On/Off." The switch is in the Off position, flipping it On unlocks the entrance to the secret temple behind the house and activates its machinery.

Master Bedroom: A queen-size bed tastelessly decorated in red satin sheets and pillowcases takes up much of the room. A closet contains ordinary clothes and shoes.

Second Bedroom: As investigators near the partially open door of this room a Listen roll reveals a soft rustling from within. Inside, the room is like any other ten-year-old girl's: toys cover the floor while pictures of horses and fairies decorate the walls. Quietly, the deranged Veronica waits in the closet. She sits at the bottom, surrounded by more toys, just waiting for the door to open.

Home Alone

Hearing the intruders downstairs and assuming them burglars, the resourceful Veronica has prepared a little surprise. In place and ready, cabbage patch doll clutched protectively under her arm, she holds a gasoline-filled water pistol in one hand and a lighter in the other, ready to defend her home. If someone opens the door she shouts: "Bang! Bang! Bang!" and squirts the investigator in the face and chest with gasoline. Blinded, the investigator barely has time to realize what has happened before Veronica flicks the lighter and tosses it, turning the unfortunate character into a human torch. Insane little Veronica then launches into a fit of giggling.

The torched investigator takes an initial 1D4 damage plus an additional 1D3 points per round for the next four rounds or until the fire is extinguished. Investigators have noticed there is at least one fire extinguisher in every room. Fabrics and furniture are fire proof and can be used to smother the burning investigator.

Veronica Hardman

Veronica watches with a smile. Then, putting on a serious face, she says: "Don't you know it's dangerous to play with fire?"

If threatened Veronica becomes scared and starts to cry. "This isn't your home, get out. My Mommy and Daddy will get you!" If the investigators try to restrain her, she kicks and screams, scratches and bites, all the time wailing "Daddy! Daddy!" and "Leave me alone!"

Veronica knows nothing about the safe or its password. Only if physically harmed does she reveal the existence of the secret temple behind the house.

Behind the House

The yard behind the house is cut into the hillside and, screened by trees, invisible to any neighbors. A well-tended garden surrounds a large, modern-styled gazebo set atop a redwood deck.

Nearing the gazebo the investigators see a light switch that illuminates the interior of the gazebo. However, if the switch inside the safe in the study has been turned to the On position a tiny green light next to the switch flashes off and on. Thus activated, flipping the light switch on results in a grinding, rumbling sound as the entire deck swings back out of the way to reveal the cult's secret underground temple. The smell of burnt and decaying flesh assails the investigator's nostrils.

The Secret Temple

This hidden structure was built with money gained robbing the houses Hardman and his men have burned, the same money that purchased this house and property. The temple is a concrete pit, twenty feet in diameter and nearly twenty feet deep. An industrial-type iron staircase is bolted to the wall, giving access to the bottom—a cement floor marked with three concentric circles. In the center of the circles is a large iron grill mounted over a fire pit. A burned and decaying human corpse lies atop the grill. All lose 1/1D4 Sanity points.

On a small table beside the altar is a fat spiral notebook. On the inside cover is written: "Our Deeds of Fire." The first page quotes from *The Letters of Nestar* (see Fire Papers #2) while the rest contain scrawled entries recording the "glorious gifts offered to Cthugha." There are approximately thirty of these entries dating back nearly five years. The last entry is dated three days ago, obviously the poor fellow still on the grill.

The "Tower of Gold" mentioned in the text originally referred to the temples of the wealthy priest class but is now interpreted by Hardman as the Bank of America building, one of San Francisco's tallest structures. On a sheet of paper inserted under the next page, are what appear to be calculations of some sort, these culminating in three dates identical to those the investigators may have found in Steve Willows' flat. A successful Occult or Astronomy roll determines that the calculations pertain to the movement of the stars. The figures predict the most opportune time for the summoning.

The cultists are already engaged in preparations for the upcoming event. It is intended that the investigators learn of the situation with just enough time to get to the scene and try and stop the activity.

Quotation from *The Letters of Nestar*

"How we ache for your touch, oh flaming lord. How we have toiled for your purpose, oh Fire King. How we've begged for your coming, oh Red Lord. But on that day we shall receive you, Grandfather Fire. For on that day all is right. The Tower of Gold shall become the Pillar of Fire and we shall give the call. Let mankind be cleansed by your power. Let the profane know, as we know, that on this day the fire shall burn so bright, burn into the memory of all men."

The Fire Papers #2

The Pillar of Fire

THE finale takes place in the Bank of America Headquarters, a downtown skyscraper 52 stories high, a honeycomb of offices. By day the work place of thousands of people, at night most floors are occupied only by cleaning and security personnel. On the 52nd floor, however, is the Carnelian Room, a popular night spot with seating for over 150 people. These the cultists intend as sacrifices to their god. They will be a fitting tribute to Cthugha who, once successfully summoned, will lay waste to the city.

With fire alarms and sprinkler systems sabotaged, the fire fighters will have ample time to start the fire and begin the ceremony before the fire is reported and a response is made. If the investigators try and short circuit the situation by phoning the police before heading to the scene, the cultists will murder the two police officers sent to investigate.

When the investigators arrive, they discover the murders committed by the firemen and are the first witnesses to the fire just now starting to spread through the middle floors of the building. Police and other fire fighters might be soon to respond but if the cultists are to be stopped, the investigators must brave the dangers of the fiery skyscraper.

During this part of the scenario it is important that the keeper maintain the pressure on the investigators. Make them feel the heat, smell the smoke, rock them with explosions, endanger them with heat, fire, and falling debris.

The Cultists Arrive

The cultists have arranged to do a spot fire safety check on the building and security is expecting them. The two fire trucks are parked on California Street in plain view. This is hoped to delay any alarms; citizens seeing smoke or fire will assume the fire department has already been notified and is on the scene.

Once inside, the cultists murder the security guards with axes and a portable flame thrower, stashing the bodies in the office. Then they head for the basement and there shut down the alarms and sabotage the sprinkler systems. Most of the electricity is shut down leaving only the elevators, the lobby, and the top floors with power. Once all the systems have been incapacitated, they begin turning the building into a suitably fiery altar. As they work their way to the roof they engage in many pre-summoning rituals, murdering any cleaning or maintenance staff they come across. Fire vampires are summoned and turned loose inside the building. The creatures hurtle down the corridors going from room to room, level to level, igniting all they touch.

The Investigators Arrive

The investigators arrive before any obvious sign of fire is visible. A good Spot Hidden detects flames licking at a window some thirty stories up. Two unmanned fire trucks are parked outside, providing the investigators with a source of useful equipment. The pumper carries suction and fire hoses of various sizes from 200 to 2000 feet long, along with various nozzles, tools, and fittings for connecting to hydrants. Rescue equipment includes first aid kits, wool blankets, self-contained breathing apparatus (three in each truck) lighting and power equipment, portable extinguishers, axes, shovels, picks, ropes, pike poles six to sixteen feet long, sledges, battering rams, bolt and wire cutters, hydraulic spreaders, power saws, blocks and tackles, portable exhaust fans, gas and water shut-off wrenches, stretchers, a resuscitator, a life net, a lifeline-firing gun, scaling ladders, floodlights and cables, and a complete assortment of hand tools.

A Fiery Death

If the investigators hesitate too long, perhaps waiting for police and fire departments to show up, the keeper may instigate events in order to hurry them along.

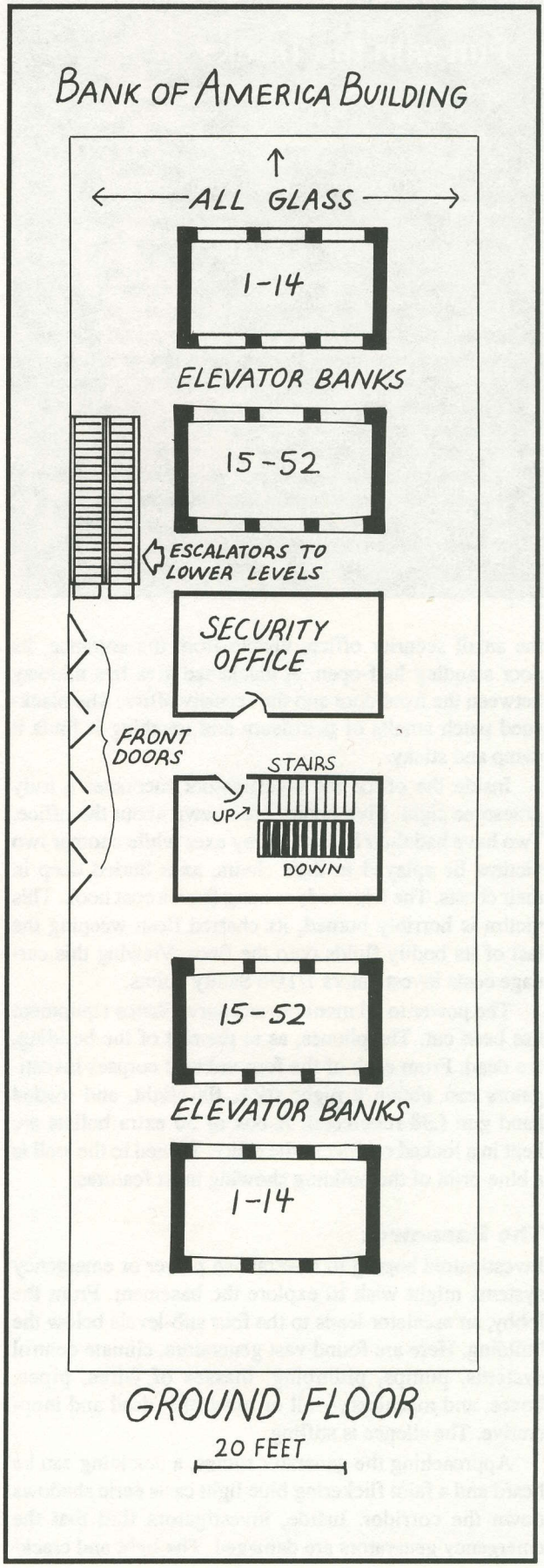
As the stand on the plaza surrounding the building they hear a crashing sound and look up to see a human being, engulfed in flames, hurtling from a broken window on about the 30th floor. The screaming figure turns slowly end over end before crashing onto the tiled plaza very near the investigators. The smoldering, scorched and crumpled corpse is that of a cleaning woman who ran afoul of the fire fighters. Anyone witnessing this loses 1/1D4 points of Sanity.

Entering the Inferno

The front glass doors are unlocked, although security is noticeably absent. The ground floor lobby surrounds six banks of elevators.

The Lobby

There is little on the ground floor besides the elevator banks, a pair of escalators leading to the lower levels, and



Fun with the Trucks

Although the pumper has been sabotaged and rendered incapable of pumping water, the investigators might find a use for the articulated boom, although if the truck is to be moved it requires an Electrical Repair roll to hot wire the vehicle. The boom can reach as high as 90 feet (eight stories) and can carry as much as 700 pounds. The boom and its platform—or basket—are operated by a variety of controls found on both the platform and the truck. These control elevation, extension, and direction. It takes a successful Operate Heavy Machinery to realize that the supporting jacks must be positioned to stabilize the truck when the boom is used. Failure to do so may result in the truck rolling over when the boom is extended too far.

Operating the boom without Operate Heavy Machinery is possible but accidents are probable. The boom may swing out of control, crashing into the building, sending glass showering, possibly hurling the occupants into some flame-encased room or onto the tiled plaza below. The platform is equipped with a jet nozzle (inoperative as the pumps are sabotaged) emergency lights, short ladders, axes, and communication equipment.

the small security office, visible from the entrance, its door standing half-open. A blackened area lies midway between the front door and the security office. The blackened patch smells of petroleum and touching it finds it damp and sticky.

Inside the office the investigators encounter a truly gruesome sight. Five bodies are strewn about the office. Two have had their heads split by axes while another two victims lie splayed in their chairs, axes buried deep in their chests. The fifth body is hung from a coat hook. This victim is horribly burned, its charred flesh weeping the last of its bodily fluids onto the floor. Viewing this carnage costs investigators 1/1D6 Sanity points.

The power to all monitors and surveillance equipment has been cut. The phones, as in the rest of the building, are dead. From each of the four unburnt corpses investigators can obtain a night stick, flashlight, and loaded hand gun (.38 revolvers). A box of 50 extra bullets are kept in a locked cabinet in the office. Pinned to the wall is a blue-print of the building showing most features.

The Basement

Investigators hoping to re-establish power or emergency systems might wish to explore the basement. From the lobby, an escalator leads to the four sub-levels below the building. Here are found vast generators, climate control systems, pumps, plumbing, masses of wires, pipes, boxes, and machinery—all or most of it dead and inoperative. The silence is stifling.

Approaching the generator rooms, a crackling can be heard and a faint flickering blue light casts eerie shadows down the corridor. Inside, investigators find that the emergency generators are damaged. The light and crackling coming from live cables shorting next to the main body of the generator. Electrical Repair rolls show the system cannot be quickly repaired.

Gaining the Roof

Investigators should realize that getting to the roof of the building is the only way to thwart the cultist's plans. Their choices are the stairs, or the waiting elevators.

The Elevators

Two banks of elevators service the 1st through 14th floors, while two other banks provide service to the 15th through 52nd floors. In the event of a fire emergency the elevators are programmed to return to the lobby, open their doors, and stand fast, inoperable. Investigators who wish to override the system must make an Electronics or Electrical Repair roll. Once the doors close, the elevator begins moving upward. Triggered by the heat-sensitive switches it heads straight to either the 14th or 15th floor (depending on which elevator was chosen) where the fire is raging strongest, and opens its doors. Roaring flames pour into the cab causing 1D8 damage to each occupant.

The doors close and the elevator, now damaged by the fire, plummets back down, finally stopping with a jolt halfway between the 3rd and 4th floors. As the cab's temperature slowly creeps upwards, investigators only escape is via the hatch in the ceiling. Once outside of the elevator, a DEX check might be required to retain footing atop the increasingly crowded elevator roof amongst the greasy cables and pulleys. Failure may mean a slip over the edge and a fifty-foot fall to the basement below. Investigators looking up into the distant reaches of the shaft see the glow of the fire in the upper levels. All feel a draft as air is sucked upward to feed the hungry flames.

The best bet from here is to pry open the doors to the 4th floor and start making progress up the stairs. However, some intrepid investigators may decide to risk a climb up the elevator shaft. An ambitious thought, listen to any reasonable plans and decide what dangers shall be faced along this path, e.g. shaft doors blowing in and falling towards our heroes, huge fireballs rolling up through the shaft, cables snapping and elevators crashing into the basement.

Prying open the doors may require STR or DEX checks as the keeper sees fit.

The Stairwell

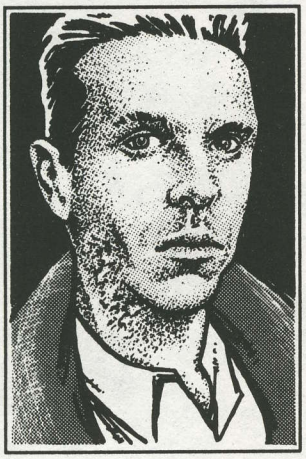
In all modern buildings great efforts are made to use fire-resistant materials. Particularly well protected are the stairwells with their heavy, fire-proof doors. Pressurized to exclude smoke, they provide the safest path for the investigators. Some illumination exists, provided by battery-powered emergency lights. Fire extinguishers and fire blankets are found in the stairwell at every floor.

Fire Vampires at play

The Lower Floors 1-15

As the investigators advance upwards, it becomes noticeably hotter and the smell of fire grows strong. As they near the 11th floor, their first meeting with a cultist fire fighter occurs.

Gary Watson, armed with a flamethrower, is on his way to meet fellow cultists on the roof. Upon seeing the investigators on the lower level, he lets loose a blast from the flamethrower down the stairwell.



Gary Watson

The flamethrower has a range of 30 feet and does 1D10 damage. Investigators with a higher DEX than Watson have an instant to react and get out of the way. Those with lower DEX are allowed a Dodge roll to escape the blast, those succeeding suffer only 1D3 points of damage.

Those caught in the full blast have their hair burnt away, their skin blistered, and their clothing set afire. At the keeper's discretion articles carried by the investigators might also be set alight. Investigators set on fire suffer an additional 1D4 points of damage per round for four rounds or until the flames are put out. Investigators may vacate the stairwell through the doors leading out into the building. Watson waits patiently but if the investigators are gone long he creeps down the stairs to stalk his prey.

The Middle Floors 16-35

This is where the fires rage most terribly. Most of the floors in this section are well alight. The keeper is encouraged to contribute towards the climactic struggle upwards, making every step fraught with danger. Chaos reigns while corridors, halls, and rooms burn. Vision is obscured by smoke, and breathing made difficult. It is possible to lose consciousness due to smoke inhalation. Door handles are red hot, superheated by the flames on the other side; masonry collapses; sparks, cinder, and ash blow through corridors. The sounds of distant (or near) explosions ring through the building while chunks of concrete fall from ceilings.

At other times, fire vampires whiz past the investigators, streaking down corridors, or are seen playing like children, bouncing off the walls, leaving scorch marks and flame wherever they go.

At some point during the struggle through the middle floors a large fire ball appears in a stairwell or corridor, room or office. It is actually a number of fire vampires merged into one fiery ball of roaring plasma. The fireball moves towards the investigators leaving them but one round to react. If they attempt to Dodge, it alters course or splits into seven separate entities that swarm over the two nearest investigators.

The Top Floors 36-52

With the stress of the inferno affecting the super structure, a section of stairwell has collapsed leaving a gap between the 47th and 50th floors. The investigators need to devise a method of crossing the chasm either by rope or ladder. Alternatively, with a little skill, it is possible to scale the outside of the building by firing a life line into the windows a couple of floors up. This being successful, all that is needed is a climb up a sheer wall with forty-four stories below and the glimpse of cultist movement on the roof above. The grappling hook on the life line has a 40% chance of making a solid connection.

An alternative route is through the ceilings in the corridors outside the stairwell. Chopping with axes allows the investigators to climb up to the next floor. Air ducts might also be used to crawl up to the top floor.

On the 52nd floor the investigators find the brightly-lit Carnelian Room. The hundred or more patrons may or may not be aware of the fire. Most likely they are, some of them having tried to leave and found the elevators inoperative and the stairs blocked by fire. Most will be too panicked to be of any help but the keeper may wish to allow a few stalwart types to accompany the investigators in the last stand against the cultists.

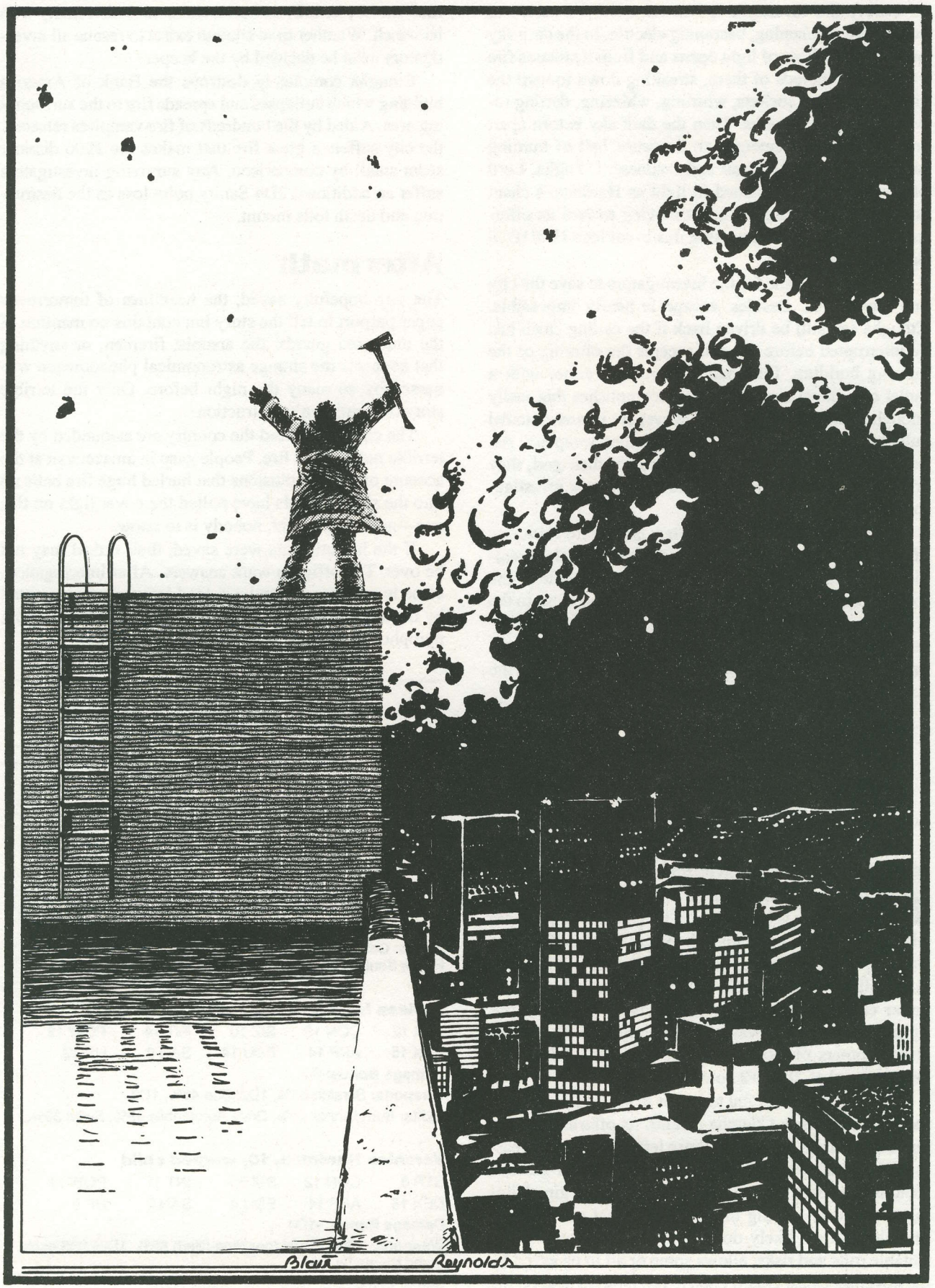
The Roof

A stairway leads to the roof and as investigators reach the door the sound of hoarse, guttural chanting can be faintly heard, Hardman's voice rising over the others. As they open the door they find the summoning reaching its final stages. They see across the roof, thirty feet away, 2D4+1 firemen cultists, faces covered by shawls and holding up sandalwood torches. In their midst, standing atop the coping on the edge of the building with his back to the investigators, is Robert Hardman, axe in hand, extolling the heavens for his god.

Back Draft

A back draft is created when a fire in a sealed area burns itself out due to lack of oxygen. If a door or window is opened, fresh air rushes in to fill the vacuum and re-ignites the fire, sometimes leading to an explosion capable of knocking down doors or hurling investigators through shattered windows. With some of the levels on fire, this could well happen when leaving the stairwell.

When a door is first opened a slight hissing is heard. Investigators making a Luck roll realize the danger and have time to duck for cover, halving any damage they may take. Others must make Dodge rolls to avoid being hit by the door blown off its hinges (1D6 points). Flame and superheated smoke follows, expanding into the area. All investigators who failed their Luck roll take 1D8 points of damage. If any of the investigators are wearing protective clothing reduce the damage to reflect this.



Cthugha, Lord of Fire

Before the investigators can react the air seems to come alive, thickening, becoming electric. In the dark sky overhead a pinhole of light opens and from it streams fire vampires, hundreds of them, streaking down toward the city like flaming rockets, whirling, whizzing, darting towards homes and parks. Then the dark sky is torn apart and from beyond emerges an immense ball of burning plasma, all flame and heat and madness: Cthugha, Lord of Fire. The roof is bathed in light as Hardman's chant continues and Cthugha begins moving toward its offering and the city. All witnessing this event lose 1D3/1D20 Sanity points.

There is still time for the investigators to save the city and themselves. Besides, escape is nearly impossible. Cthugha can still be driven back if the calling chant can be interrupted before the god accepts the offering of the burning building. Eliminating Hardman, either with a bullet or a shove over the edge, accomplishes this easily enough. Standing in the way however are insane, suicidal cultists armed with fire axes and other weapons. Although desirous of death at the hands of their god, they are not afraid to die in its defense. They attack investigators mercilessly.

In the meantime, two helicopters heave into view, one of them from KHYN-TV, the other a rescue vehicle scrambled by the local Coast Guard station. As the battle on the rooftop breaks out the news copter draws too close to the still-descending Cthugha and is seized by a fiery pseudopod that shoots out without warning. The copter explodes at its touch providing a fitting backdrop to the scene on the roof.

The Climax

IF the investigators stop Hardman, whether by putting a bullet in his back or by shoving him off the edge, the ceremony is broken and Cthugha drawn back into whatever space it normally inhabits. The city, if not the Bank of America building, is saved. Any cultists still alive will fight to the death. The fire is eventually brought under control and any survivors saved, either by fire fighters making their way up through the building, or by rescue copters plucking them from the roof. All gain a Sanity award of 2D10+2 points.

If the investigators fail to kill or stop Hardman within the next six rounds Cthugha reaches its offering and enters the building, feeding on those left inside and increasing the destruction of the fire ten fold. Huge semi-gaseous pseudopods reach up and over the roof and begin claiming the cultists, calling them to their final reward. The investigators are likely doomed unless the keeper, with suitable rolls and risks, allows some or all to be saved by the hovering Coast Guard copter. Too large to land on the roof, the copter must lift each character individually with its winch. Whether time enough exists to rescue all investigators must be decided by the keeper.

Cthugha completely destroys the Bank of America building which collapses and spreads fire to the surrounding area. Aided by the hundreds of fire vampires released, the city suffers a great fire that makes the 1906 disaster seem small by comparison. Any surviving investigators suffer an additional 2D4 Sanity point loss as the destruction and death tolls mount.

Aftermath

The city hopefully saved, the headlines of tomorrow's paper purport to tell the story but contains no mention of the murdered guards, the arsonist firemen, or anything that connects the strange astronomical phenomenon witnessed by so many the night before. Only the terrible story of a building's destruction.

The city, and indeed the country are astounded by the terrible news of the fire. People gasp in amazement at the account of great explosions that hurled huge fire balls up into the sky. Officials have pulled the cover tight on this one—nothing gets out, nobody is to know.

If the investigators were saved, their ordeal may not be over. The officials want answers. After interrogation, some investigators may be judged insane and committed by the state. Others may find themselves suffering from pyrophobia or, worse, pyrophilia.

Statistics

Robert Hardman, 39, lieutenant, priest of Cthugha

STR 17	CON 15	SIZ 15	INT 16	POW 22
DEX 11	APP 12	EDU 17	SAN 0	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3+db; Axe 45%, 1D6+1+db

Skills: Astronomy 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 14%, Operate Heavy Machinery 65%, Start Fire 95%.

Spells: Call/Dismiss Cthugha, Summon/Bind Flame Vampire, Flame Soul of Cthugha.

Melissa Hardman, 37, cultist housewife

STR 12	CON 16	SIZ 10	INT 14	POW 12
DEX 15	APP 14	EDU 14	SAN 0	HP 13

Damage Bonus: 0

Weapons: Scratch 65%, 1D2; Bite 45%, 1D3.

Skills: Burn Dinner 55%, Drive Automobile 45%, Swim 39%.

Veronica Hardman, 10, warped child

STR 6	CON 12	SIZ 5	INT 11	POW 11
DEX 15	APP 14	EDU 4	SAN 0	HP 9

Damage Bonus: -1D4

Weapons: Water Pistol (gasoline-filled) 65%, 1D6+1D3 each round thereafter.

Skills: Climb 55%, Hide 45%, Sneak 65%.

The Fire Fighters

Tommy Johnson

Tommy Johnson, 33

STR 16 CON 13 SIZ 17
INT 12 POW 13 DEX 11
APP 10 EDU 12 SAN 0
HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Flamethrower 55%, 2D6; Axe 65%, 1D6+1+db

Skills: Climb 85%, Electrical Repair 45%.

John Crislow, 27

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 12
INT 14 POW 15 DEX 10
APP 8 EDU 10 SAN 0
HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 65%, 1D3+db; Pike 65%, 1D8+db.

Skills: Climb 75%, Drive Pumper 75%, Jump 45%.

Will Tripper, 44

STR 13 CON 16 SIZ 16 INT 14 POW 11
DEX 10 APP 12 EDU 13 SAN 0 HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 30%, 1D3+db; Knife 40%, 1D4+2+db.

Skills: Lock Pick 50%, Mechanical Repair 75%, Polish Fire Truck 65%.

Duane Collins

Duane Collins, 29

STR 14 CON 16 SIZ 14
INT 11 POW 13 DEX 15
APP 13 EDU 10 SAN 0
HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Burning Torch 35%, 1D6+db; Axe 1D6+1+db.

Skills: Aim Water Nozzle 50%, Operate Heavy Machinery 75%.

Phil Watson, 26

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 15
INT 15 POW 17 DEX 13
APP 13 EDU 10 SAN 0
HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Crowbar 65%, 1D8+db; Grapple 35%, special.

Skills: Computer Use 75%, Listen 55%.

Gary Watson, 24

STR 14 CON 14 SIZ 17 INT 12 POW 16
DEX 12 APP 12 EDU 13 SAN 0 HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 40%, 1D3+db; Pike 1D8+db.

Skills: Climb 55%.

Marcus Smith

Marcus Smith, 24

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 12
INT 15 POW 15 DEX 18
APP 9 EDU 16 SAN 0
HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Burning Torch 55%, 1D6+db; Shovel 55%, 1D8+db.

Skills: Climb 65%,

Al Darvey 38

STR 14 CON 13 SIZ 17
INT 11 POW 14 DEX 12
APP 10 EDU 14 SAN 0
HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Axe 1D6+1+db; Bolt Cutters 45%, 1D4+db.

Skills: Climb 55%, First Aid 65%, Spot Hidden 55%.

Nick Stoddard, 37

STR 13 CON 16 SIZ 14 INT 16 POW 17
DEX 17 APP 14 EDU 12 SAN 0 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Axe 75%, 1D6+1+db.

Skills: Climb 55%, Hide 40%, Sneak 45%, Spot Hidden 55%.

Jack O'Connor, 31

STR 16 CON 15 SIZ 16 INT 14 POW 17
DEX 14 APP 15 EDU 15 SAN 0 HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Axe 40%, 1D6+1+db; Pick 65%, 1D8+db.

Skills: Climb 50%, Fire Lifeline 65%.

Twelve Fire Vampires

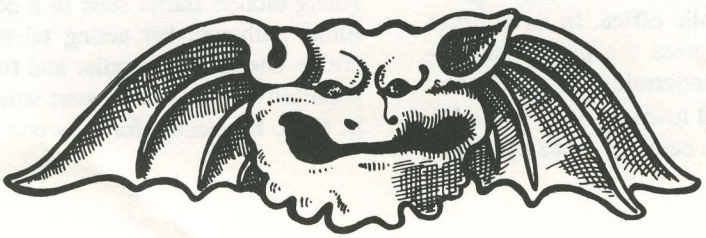
	CON	SIZ	DEX	INT	POW	HP
One	8	1	15	7	10	8
Two	10	1	18	10	13	10
Three	9	1	14	9	13	9
Four	11	1	16	11	15	11
Five	11	1	22	16	14	11
Six	8	1	16	12	10	8
Seven	9	1	10	10	12	9
Eight	7	1	17	14	16	7
Nine	12	1	15	11	11	12
Ten	7	1	16	9	9	7
Eleven	6	1	18	10	10	6
Twelve	10	1	20	8	12	10

Move: 11

Weapons: Touch 85%, 2D6 plus magic point drain.

Armor: Unharmed by material weapons.

Spells: None. ■



The Professionals

"And in its despair mankind shall choose its leaders where it finds them, and though they shall promise much they will bring but further despair. The void looms ahead, and none will avoid it."

The Book of Dyzan

THIS scenario finds the investigators attempting to damage the reputation of Elwood 'Ted' McKinney, a well-known Republican senator from New England. Senator McKinney, the eldest son of a very wealthy family, is opposed by one Miranda Sharpe, an ex-B movie queen running on the Democratic ticket. Sharpe has overcome the stigma of her former career and shown herself to be an intelligent and incisive opponent. A populist candidate, she has put the incumbent McKinney through a tough race.

The investigators will possibly believe that they have been hired by members of McKinney's family attempting to undermine the Senator and replace him with his younger brother, Brandon. As the plot unfolds, however, the investigators find themselves caught up in an almost impenetrable web of political intrigue.

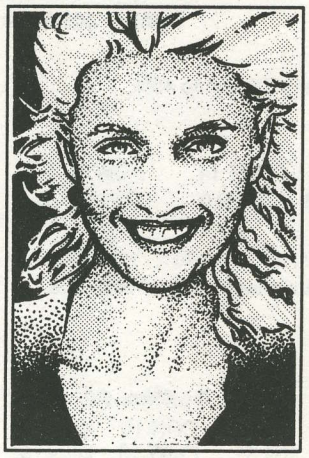
It will probably never be clear to the investigators exactly what is going on, or who is pulling the strings. They may become lost in a welter of confusing facts and purposeful disinformation. Unknown to them, Miranda Sharpe controls nearly everyone they come in contact with. To aid them along in their quest, the keeper is encouraged to use such characters as the man in black and attorney Edwin Schneider to feed information to the investigators whenever they need it.

Keeper's Information

Although Miranda Sharpe appears as an attractive woman forty years old, she is considerably older and in no way human. The person who was once Miranda Sharpe is long gone, absorbed by the alien intelligence that now inhabits her form. A creature with an insatiable desire for power and control, it now attempts to insinuate itself into human politics where it can move amongst—and manipulate—those in public office. In an effort to secure her election Miranda uses the investigators—along with many others—to undermine her opponents.

Miranda grew up in a small town, moving to the big city at the age of 20 to pursue a career as a beauty queen. It was while attending a pageant in Orange, New Jersey, while walking along the water's edge alone late at night, that the alien creature found her.

All mouths and eyes, the nearly formless visitor from deep space materialized before her and attacked. Consuming her, joining with her, it tore loose the strings of her DNA and wrapped itself in her shape. It rebuilt itself and Miranda from the inside out, absorbing and storing her memories, dispensing with petty emotions and keeping only her harsh will. The monstrosity replaced her almost seamlessly.



Miranda Sharpe

The alien avoids detection by appearing as one of it's victims. The victim's image is stored as a genetic code within the alien vampire's body. Based on this stored code, the alien projects a wave form throughout its body distorting and twisting its true appearance into a perfect image of the victim. The image has all the attributes of the host, including voice, texture, odor, and other significant fixtures.

Miranda stayed in the beauty contest circuit until the late 1950s. Periodically she allowed herself to age, altered her appearance, then moved on to another region. And always, she would feed on the unsuspecting.

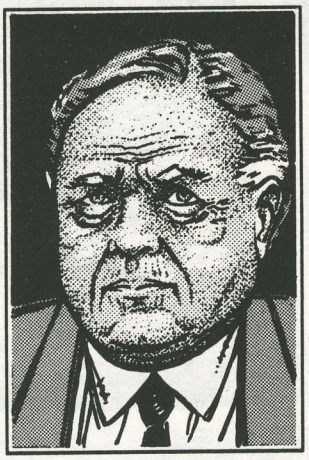
During the 1960s the Miranda/vampire discovered there was more money to be made in pornography than in the beauty circuits and began a new career. Moving in the pornography circle allowed her to go further underground, where periodic feedings were less likely to be traced. Many of the people performing in pornographic movies were separated from their families, their disappearance often not noted with any great concern. Runaways can runaway again, after all.

By the early 1980s she was again ready to move on. Altering her features slightly, she re-emerged as the young blonde starlet seen in a dozen low-budget action films. Although her acting talents were disparaged by critics, she proved popular and found it easy to turn this popularity into voter support when she ran for Congress in 1988. Re-elected for a second term but somehow not

satisfied, she turned her attention to the Senate seat held by four-term Senator Ted McKinney.

Senator Ted McKinney

Ted McKinney is a dissipated, alcoholic, womanizer whose philandering exploits, if made public, would destroy his public image and career. Twice married and divorced, McKinney's second wife left him after finding him in bed last year with Congresswoman Miranda Sharpe, a detail unknown by press or public. Two months later Sharpe announced her intention to oppose McKinney in the upcoming senatorial race.

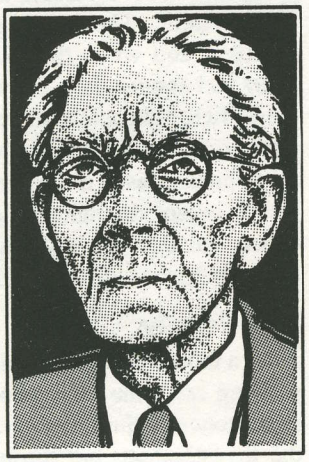


Senator Ted McKinney

Having held office in his home state without significant opposition for 24 years, the senator has led a secret life of moral iniquity surrounded by the protective bureaucracy of the government, and the even more effective shield of his family's money. Ted's indiscretions have only lately filtered out to the general public's notice.

Simon Childe

Of course Miranda Sharpe is walking a tightrope of her own. The pornography films made in the 60s and 70s, if brought to public knowledge would sink her reputation. Only one person has guessed the truth about Miranda Sharpe--a past-lover named Simon Childe.



Simon Childe

Simon, then a young would-be writer, fell in love with Miranda in 1942, the first time he saw her walking the boardwalk along the New Jersey coast. A bookish fellow hungry for experience, Simon's desire was unquenchable. Summoning up his courage, he introduced himself one day and soon after the two were lovers.

Simon knew Miranda for only two weeks before she was taken by the alien creature. Although their relationship continued through the summer, he sensed somehow a change in her. In her human incarnation Miranda had found Childe amusing, interesting, perhaps even useful. The new, possessed Miranda had less use for the man but tolerated him in order to maintain appearances.

Miranda left him at the end of summer. Simon—although he knew something was wrong with her, that she was somehow changed—never forgot her. She was the one true love of his life. They met again years later when Simon was working in the adult film industry as a screenwriter. Although he was sure, despite her youthful appearance, that she was his Miranda, she did not acknowledge him. When she re-emerged years later as a political candidate he spotted her again. Suspecting what is wrong with her, Simon has concocted a plan to banish the alien thing from her body and reclaim his lost love.

The Cell Vampire

Unlike the somewhat similar star vampire which merely feasts on a victim's blood, this creature also consumes its victim's genetic code, absorbing the information and storing it in reservoirs within its cells. Once the cell vampire has feasted it can immediately reorder its own composition along the DNA pattern of its victim.

The cell vampire is non-terrestrial, and normal weapons do only minimum damage. Additionally, the Cell Vampire knits up wounds in its host body at the rate of 10 hit points per round. Devices that invade the cell vampire's genetic memory and processing function, such as waveform transmission of the ODIN device, unravels the being's appearance, like fingers pulling apart cotton wool.

The cell vampire also emits a strong electromagnetic field that increases in intensity during times of stress. This invisible cloud of energy is capable of interfering with the operation of micro-computers or any other device employing CMOS and magnetic storage technology. Miranda Sharpe is known among her staff for her refusal to deal with computers ("I just don't get along with them") and for her penchant for wearing only old-fashioned, spring-driven watches.

Investigators' Information

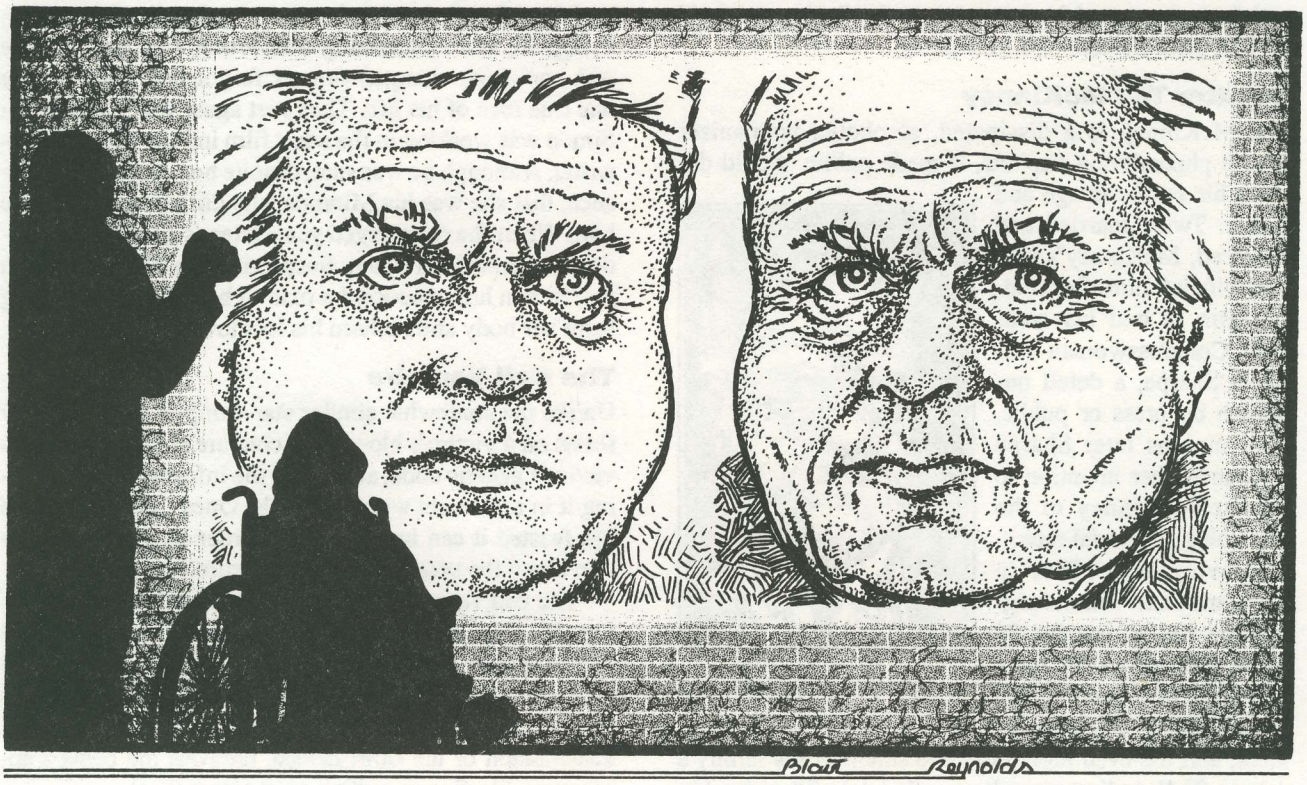
It is assumed investigators have gained a reputation as investigative agents or troubleshooters. They are contacted by a mysterious man in black.

The Man in Black

This individual shows up one day at an investigator's home or place of business, driving a huge stretch limousine. Dressed in black and wearing dark glasses, he presents the business card of a well-known lawyer, Edwin R. Schneider.

The Man In Black

Investigators immediately recognize Schneider, his face familiar from dozens of TV commercials offering to handle the civil



effects of a dissolute life

claims of individuals hurt on the job or otherwise—basically an ambulance chaser operating on a state-wide scale. The man in black says that Schneider has an interesting offer for the investigator and his friends. It pays quite well.

The man in black arranges a time to meet the investigators, indicating he will drive them to Schneider's office, then leaves.

Edwin R. Schneider

Edwin R. Schneider

The limo and man arrive right on time. Inside the car, the investigators find the interior superbly-appointed. The man in black offers them drinks from the car's wet bar while soothing music plays on a digital surround-sound system. It is all very pleasant.

Within a few minutes they arrive at a downtown high-rise office building. The man in black escorts them to a large, well lit office. Schneider, his face familiar from hundreds of TV commercials, smiles at the investigators from behind a chrome and glass desk. Stepping out from behind the desk, he shakes the investigators' hands, introducing himself, and calling them by name. Then he makes them an offer.

Certain people are willing to pay good money for information about a certain, influential politician and making it public. The investigators will be paid $15,000 apiece if and when the job is satisfactorily completed. Schneider assures them that the individual in question is no longer fit to hold public office and that it would be in the best interests of the country if he were forced to step down.

Schneider asks if they are interested in taking the job. If they accept, Schneider rises and walks to the rear of the office. He tells the investigators to remain seated then dims the lights before leaving the room.

The Family

After a moment a door opens and through it comes a man pushing someone in a wheelchair. The darkness of the room conceals their identity. The shadowy man speaks to the investigators, but through a hand-held microphone that electronically alters his voice. His speech is clear and intelligible, but stripped of human intonation.

"Greetings. I'm glad we could interest you in our work."

The man holds forth a second object in his other hand, aims it across the room, and triggers it, bathing the far wall in light. The investigators see a huge portrait of Senator McKinney, created by the man's hand-held projector.

"I assume you are all familiar with the Senator. As you may know he is presently campaigning for re-election to his fifth term in office. We want you to help pre-

vent him from gaining that objective. It has become apparent to many that McKinney is no longer fit to serve and, in fact, poses certain risks to national security. Assassination is, of course, out of the question but if some of his rumored past indiscretions were to be proven and made public, he would almost certainly fail in his bid for re-election."

The figure in the wheelchair finally speaks. "Yes. He must be stopped." The voice is dry, little louder than a whisper, but obviously feminine.

Investigators making Spot Hidden rolls can make out the features of the man holding the projector. Know rolls let them realize that this is Brandon McKinney, younger brother of the Senator. This could only mean the figure seated in the wheelchair is the aged McKinney matriarch, Claire McKinney.

The shadowy man moves a switch on the projector and two faces are now cast on the wall, one a much younger McKinney, the other as he appears today.

"These two photographs are separated by less than five years," explains the shadowy man. "It is easy to see how badly McKinney's health has been affected by his dissolute life-style. Medical opinion is that he is definately headed for a breakdown, but his popularity is such that unless steps are taken he will almost certainly be re-elected."

As Brandon speaks, the two images merge, blending together to form a grinning death's head. Brandon again thumbs the projector and the face of a beautiful blonde-haired woman appears. She is probably familiar to all of the investigators as Miranda Sharpe, ex-movie star, current congresswoman, and Democratic candidate for a seat in the U.S. Senate.

"I believe," says Brandon, "you may be able to start your investigation by looking into McKinney's past connections with Ms. Sharpe. Politics sometimes makes for strange bedfellows."

The image in the circle of light softens and changes. Sharpe's face is replaced by the image of an older woman. She too is blonde, but her face is gaunt, her skin patterned with thousands of fine wrinkles.

"This is a former friend of Miss Sharpe's. Her name is Mae Ann Spirelli, but some of you may know her as Tanya Desire. Within the adult film industry she is nearly legendary. She may be able to help you."

Investigators familiar with porn films, or who make an EDU x1 roll, remember Tanya Desire as a major star a few years back. She retired recently, amidst a flurry of rumors about her health. If this is a recent picture, it is evident that she is ill. A successful Medicine roll diagnoses her as infected with AIDS.

The shadowy figure draws an envelope from inside his coat and lays it on the desk. "In here you will find the address of Ms. Spirelli and a retainer fee of $2000 each. If you have any more questions, please contact Mr. Schneider."

Then, shutting off the hand projector, he pushes the wheelchair back out of the room. The lights come back up and Schneider reappears. If the investigators have no questions he shows them out of the office.

If any of the investigators are wearing digital watches, sometime later one of them finds his watch has stopped, the time shown indicating that it failed during the mysterious meeting. It proves unrepairable.

The watch was damaged by the electromagnetic field of the vampire/Miranda posing as the wheelchair-bound matriarch Claire McKinney. Sharpe has taken over control of Brandon and now uses him to destroy his own brother. Claire McKinney is dead, killed by her own son at the demand of the monstrous creature.

Mae Ann Spirelli

THE address given the investigators is that of a small bungalow in the suburbs. Investigation shows that the house is actually owned by a woman named Belle Thrimm, a name that might be recognized as that of another well-known adult film star. If Spirelli's financial records are somehow gained or accessed, Accounting shows her heavily in debt, mostly due to recent costly medical bills owed to the Powell Center for Communicable Diseases.

Adult Film Magazines

A call placed to any one of a number of publications provides these answers to investigator questions.

- ☐ Tanya Delight retired from the adult film industry nine months ago and has since disappeared. She claimed she was retiring, that she had had enough of the industry and was just getting out.
- ☐ Belle Thrimm is another, much less famous, porno actress--an obese woman whose film credits include such titles as *Buxom Beauties* and *Fat Girls*.
- ☐ As far as anyone at the magazine knows, Miranda Sharpe has never had any connection with the adult film industry.

The Powell Center for Communicable Diseases

Obtaining Spirelli's records proves difficult, possibly requiring Law, Fast Talk, or other means. Someone with the right equipment and a successful Computer Use roll might be able to tap the hospital's system but without proper passwords files are inaccessible.

If the investigators somehow learn the truth about Mae Ann Spirelli they find she is suffering from AIDS and has been given only a few months to live.

Belle sits with Mae Ann

A Visit to the House

Mae Ann Spirelli's house is located about ten miles out of the city in a rural neighborhood. A modest home made of stucco, its canary yellow paint is badly faded. Curtains in all the windows are a bright, checked yellow pattern, as faded as the paint. Ten years ago the home was probably stylish and tasteful. Now it is an artifact of a decade past, in need of a complete facelift.

If investigators knock at the front door it opens to reveal an obese woman, traces of make-up on her face. She seems surprised--she is expecting a delivery from the local pharmacy. This is Belle Thrimm, ex-porn star and now nursemaid to the dying Mae Ann Spirelli.

Belle Thrimm

If anyone asks to speak with Mae Ann, Belle turns protective but relents after a little coaxing and invites the investigators in. Belle shows the investigators into the bedroom. The blinds are drawn, the stink of human sickness nearly overpowering.

Mae Ann Spirelli may once have been Tanya Delight, may once have been an attractive woman, but now she is little more than an aching jumble of skin and bones. Her face is haggard and skull-like, her hair limp and dull. She lies motionless under a stained sheet, studying the investigators through dull, half-lidded eyes, saying nothing. At the mention of the name Miranda Sharpe she stirs slightly, her mouth opening to expose yellow teeth and a gray tongue.

"The Nightingale!" she croaks at them. "She is. . . she is. . ." Her breath rattles loudly in her throat and her eyes roll back, revealing bloodshot whites turned yellow. Her eyes close and the breathing stops. Mae Ann Spirelli is dead.

Mae Ann Spirelli

Belle is deeply distressed, but has been expecting the end for some time. She is glad her friend is finally at peace.

Belle knows nothing about Miranda Sharpe and can't imagine what connection Mae Ann might have with her.

Belle returns to Mae's room for a moment and comes back carrying a small address book. "I probably shouldn't give this to you, but maybe it will help." She tosses the book to an investigator then asks them to leave. Her eyes are wet with tears.

The Address Book

The pages of this book are filled with names written in Mae Ann's neat, tiny script. Investigators familiar with adult films notice a number of familiar names, actors and directors, as well as a number of unrecognized names.

One listing is circled—the phone number of a Larry Pantheto (no address)—and next to it the word Nightingale is written. Another address—that of a man named Simon Childe—is also marked, this time with the initials

M.S. (Miranda Sharpe). There are no additional clues in the book, but investigators interested in phoning pornographic film stars may be intrigued by the possibilities offered them.

If the Pantheto number is called, it rings about a half-dozen times before picking up. On the other end a moment of silence is followed by a short recorded message. A harsh voice repeats the number called. "Leave a message if you like. I'll get back to you when I can."

Simon Childe's address is as follows:

Simon Childe
Supervisor of Technical Communications
Federal Building #23
Suite 4632
Baltimore, Maryland

The Phone Call

SHORTLY after their visit to the dying porn star the investigators receive a mysterious phone call. The voice is harsh, furtive sounding. Investigators who phoned the Larry Pantheto number and heard the tape machine can, with an Idea roll, recognize this voice as the same.

The informant claims to have something very interesting, very incriminating, and very embarrassing for the candidate Miranda Sharpe. If the investigators have $5000, the dirt is theirs. A meeting is arranged for late night in an alley in a deserted part of town.

The Meeting

The investigators wait at the appointed place while ruddy neon light from a garish sign strobes the alley. Silently a man steps out of the darkness. The collar of his coat is turned up, a hat pulled down over his head. His skin appears dark and swarthy.

"I got the package," he croaks. "You got the bucks?"

If the money is handed over, the figure produces from inside his coat a large video reel container closed with straps. The figure then slips away into darkness.

This is Larry Pantheto, as investigators who try and stop him may discover. Pantheto is a failed adult film director, his career cut short by cocaine abuse and resultant financial troubles. He sifted down through the dregs of the industry eventually ending up directing illegal films featuring underage actors. It has even been rumored that Pantheto once directed a "snuff film," wherein a person was murdered. He's not proud of himself.

Pantheto directed the movie that he has given the investigators. He is one of the few people who know some of the truth about Miranda Sharpe. He knew Mae Ann Spirelli from some work she did for him on some of his films. That was how she came to know the Nightingale.

The Tape

The tape is a 3/4 inch professional size and investigators will have to locate equipment capable of running it. Any video production company or studio will have such equipment. One of the technicians will operate the equipment for the investigators.

The movie is shot on film, later transferred to tape. Sound is ambient, it is possible to hear both the movements of the cameraman and the motor of the camera. A microphone occasionally wobbles into the left side of the frame.

Miranda Sharpe lies on a bed, dressed in a sheer nightgown. She stares up into a camera positioned high above the bed, shooting straight down into her face. For a moment her face fills with emotion. Complex, unreadable feelings war within her features. Then her face relaxes again. She closes her eyes and smiles.

A masculine voice mumbles something from off-camera. Miranda turns. "Come here baby," she says.

A naked boy--maybe 15 years old--enters the frame, stepping up to the bed. He is thin, with mottled skin, acne marking his face and shoulders. Well equipped, he quickly comes alert under Miranda's attentions. Miranda slides around him as the camera moves about the scene clumsily. The boy loses himself, his eyes closing as he concentrates on the motions of their bodies. Miranda bends down and licks his face, then bares her teeth and tears a mouthful of flesh from the boy's angular cheek.

The boy begins to scream but is forcibly held by a suddenly powerful Miranda who sinks her teeth into his neck. Expertly she peels back skin and flesh as blood spurts forth, splattering Miranda's white body. The camera roams jerkily around the scene panning, zooming and trucking while the boy's screams die and his struggles grow weak. Now with a knife Miranda works over the body, amputating limbs efficiently, then splitting him open from throat to pelvis with rough, sawing strokes. Peeling back the flaps of flesh and ribs Miranda presses herself into the gelid mass of exposed organs for a moment to join with the boy's still-shuddering body.

The film ends abruptly, the screen filling with video snow.

Anyone viewing the tape suffers a loss of 1D2/1D8+1 Sanity points. If a technician has helped the investigators he is now either screaming hysterically or unconscious.

Simon Childe

SIMON Childe is in his early sixties, a thin man of above average height with hair a mouse-colored gray. Intelligent and scholarly, his watery blue eyes are accented by bifocals with spidery black wire-frames. Although he seems weighed down by some undefined burden, people find him to be friendly and likeable.

The ODIN Project

ODIN, an acronym for Optically Distributed Interactive Neuro-implant, is an experimental cybernetic implant. It replaces one of its user's eyes, interfacing at the molecular level with the optic nerve through a matrix of synthetic DNA "seeds" that reproduce, expand, and mesh with human nerve tissue. Simon is in charge of writing ODIN's user's manual.

ODIN allows its user to operate, by thought, electronic devices such as computers with pulses from an Infra-Red (IR) transmitter/transducer. Such devices must be fitted with a matching optical interface. ODIN is a real-time link between the virtual reality within computers and actual reality.

One intended application for ODIN is that of information gathering during the proposed space flight to Mars. With this application in mind, the prototype has been designed as an aid to someone observing and collecting wave form samples. For this purpose the device contains a 3 gigabit bubble-memory module. This module allows the device to store three dimensional images of wave forms observed through the ODIN implant. Stored wave forms can be downloaded to a device with a larger storage capacity.

Implanted, the ODIN device appears as a solid black orb. It improves all sense related skills (Spot Hidden, Listen, etc.) by 25%. An on board microprocessor analyzes and sorts all incoming sensory data, responding to somatic stimuli derived from the organic/inorganic interface at the optic nerve. The device is capable of learning from its user.

But ODIN is not without bugs. Each of the DNA seeds used to create its inorganic interface with the optic nerve has been encoded with a complex replication program. Unfortunately the replication program does not know when to shut off. Once started it continues to function—indefinitely. Information captured as waveform samples invade the replication program, altering its pattern, these stored patterns becoming the new replication patterns.

Simon knew Miranda Sharpe years ago, in 1942, when they were both young—before she was seized by the malevolent entity that now occupies her body. Simon continued as her lover even after the creature had taken her but, sensing the change in the woman, he drifted away to pursue a career as a writer. Why the monster chose not to slay and devour Childe is unknown.

Despite his dreams of novels, Childe never achieved more than a salaried job as a technical writer, occasionally free lancing when and where he could. In the late sixties he wrote some scenarios for the adult film industry and during a visit to one of the sets he met the Nightingale, a rising porn queen with an amazing resemblance to his lost love. Although the woman never acknowledged Childe, he was sure it was her, although the years had seemed to change her but little. Childe was now nearly forty but the woman he had known looked to be no more than twenty-five.

Spurned by the woman, Childe became involved for a short time with Tanya Desire—Mae Ann Spirelli—the two of them sharing living arrangements for several months until Childe landed a job with the federal government and moved to the East Coast. If informed of Mae Ann's death, Childe expresses sadness.

Simon's work for the government finally brought him to documenting weapons' systems' software for the military, his untiring doggedness bringing him a series of promotions that finally found him a supervisor on the government's top-secret ODIN project.

Simon's Secret

Simon has for the last few years been observing Miranda Sharpe, first as a bimbo starlet then later after she was elected to a seat in Congress. He has watched her race from the Senate avidly, sure that this woman is the same he loved so many years ago, and whom he met later in life when she was the Nightingale. He has correctly deduced that she is inhabited by some sort of alien intelligence and has concocted a plan to rectify the situation. Using the ODIN prototype he has stolen from the lab, he intends to rearrange Miranda Sharpe's altered DNA and restore the woman he loved, saving her, as well as the world, from whatever evil inhabits her form. After analyzing the nature of the entity occupying Miranda, he will use ODIN's optical downloading feature to 'edit' the woman's genetic structure.

Simon only has days before the theft is discovered. He knows a surgeon of low reputation capable of implanting the eye, but it will cost him his entire life's savings. The operation is scheduled to take place a few days after the investigators first contact Childe, at the keeper's option. Once the surgery has been accomplished, Childe affects dark glasses at all times.

Simon possesses a notebook computer equipped with an ODIN-type optical interface. A special high capacity memory array enables the computer to map entire organisms as encoded pixels. Its developers call it a PC—short for Pocket Cray—as a joke. This device has also been borrowed from the government. Using ODIN and the PC to alter Miranda's waveform pattern, he believes he can purge the entity from her system by transmitting a redefined waveform in her direction through ODIN's optical interface. It is an insane plan, but Simon has been mad, in his own quiet way, for years.

Simon and the Investigators

If the investigators telephone Childe's office they are told he is on leave attending a seminar in whatever city the scenario is taking place and provides the callers with the name of the hotel. A phone call to the hotel gets through to Childe who, if Miranda's name is mentioned, willingly agrees to a meeting at a nearby restaurant.

At the restaurant Childe seems friendly but he is only meeting with the investigators because he thinks they

might be out to make trouble for Miranda. He intends to save her. He's the only one who can do it. Outsiders must be prevented from interfering.

He reveals nothing of his plans but if adequately persuaded he may be induced to talk about his past relationship with Miranda Sharpe. He can tell them how years ago he adored her when they were both youngsters back in the forties.

Few investigators are likely to miss the fact that Simon appears to be years older than the woman and they may quietly decide the man must be insane. If someone mentions the incongruity of Simon's statement, the man quickly turns silent, his face creasing with anxiety when he realizes the enormity of his slip-up. A quick Psychology check reveals the man is not wholly sane. Is he lying about knowing Miranda Sharpe years ago?

Simon excuses himself, quickly, and leaves the investigators.

Simon's Room

It is possible that the investigators might sneak into Childe's hotel room—particularly while he is meeting with other investigators in the restaurant. The hotel doors are reasonably secure but easily opened by anyone making a successful Locksmith roll. A failed Luck roll means the investigator has been spotted by a hotel employee. If caught, burgling investigators are taken first to the security office and then the local police precinct. Arraignment is the following day and the suspects will be released on $1000 bail to face charges later. Attorney Schneider will post bail if contacted and secretly make an effort to clear the matter up. The incident never appears on the investigators' records.

If the investigators get inside they find the room is neat--Simon apparently hasn't even used any of the room's stationery. Looking around on the desk, an investigator making a Spot Hidden roll notes the faint impression of writing on a note pad. Pencil rubbing reveals the following cryptic phrase:

"Dr. Ruggerio, 8:30 am"

Simon's briefcase is tucked under a bench-like desk in a shallow alcove near the bathroom. It is an expandable leather attache, with a solid combination lock. The case can be forced (it has a STR of 8) or opened with a Locksmith roll. Forcing the case unmistakably mars the leather surface.

Inside is a slim notebook computer with a rubberized case and something in a vinyl resealable package. A strip of blue tape is fastened over the seal. In bright yellow letters it reads:

CLOSURE! DO NOT OPEN OUTSIDE CLEAN ROOM! STERILE
CLOSURE! DO NOT OPEN OUTSIDE CLEAN ROOM! STERILE
CLOSURE! DO NOT OPEN OUTSIDE CLEAN ROOM! STERILE
CLOSURE! DO NOT OPEN OUTSIDE CLEAN ROOM! STERILE

The Computer

Anyone with Computer Use skill immediately notes the machine is equipped with advanced inputting features. An optical jack, infra-red receptor glowing dully, is mounted to one side of the display screen. A dome shaped bead of laser light winks to life near the key board which an Idea roll identifies as an optical pointer that functions like a trackball, the pointer activated by passing a fingertip or similar object through the laser dome.

The computer activates automatically when opened, booting up from an internal bubble memory array loading a program called "Genome Map." A wire frame male human body, rotating endlessly through all angles and axes is shown below the program title. The figure alters continuously, sequencing subtly through a seemingly endless catalogue of body types.

A Computer Use roll is required to get past the opening screen of the program. The second screen is a menu of selections, listing a number of names, including Simon's. Clicking on any name brings a body image onto the screen. The pointer can be used to navigate into the body image, zooming endlessly inward, until the gene patterns of the body are revealed in all their helical beauty.

Anyone using the program, or observing someone using it, and making an Idea roll realizes the machine contains complete genetic images of several people, rendered in state-of-the-art virtual reality.

Another Computer Use roll allows the investigator to learn how to alter the gene map of the selected person by dragging winking, rotating pixels around on the screen. Severe editing is reflected in the outline of the mapped body shown in a window at the top left of the screen. Arms shrink, heads enlarge, shoulders stoop, legs lengthen, etc., simulating changes made to the genetic patterns.

The Vinyl Bag

The bag is found to contain a small black orb about an inch and a quarter in diameter. An Idea roll allows an investigator to note that it is about the same size as a human eyeball. The orb is featureless, matte black, except for a blue pad across the back. The pad bears the same sterility warning as the tape across the bag's closure. Under the pad is a pulsing grid of brightly colored interconnecting lines. A magnifying glass allows the investigators to determine there is a pattern to the criss-crossing lines. Electronics or Computer Use allows the investigator to determine that this is a highly complex logic circuit embedded in living organic tissue. This discovery costs 1/1D2 Sanity points.

Simon returns to the room before investigators are able to damage or steal the device. Discovering the intruders he demands they unhand his property—carefully. If they refuse Simon produces a shrouded 9-mm handgun to help convince them, then dials hotel security. He suggests the investigators have a few moments before the authorities arrive and that escape is still possible. He stands aside to let them leave.

A few hours later, Simon checks out.

Dr. Ruggerio

INVESTIGATORS following up on the Dr. Ruggerio clue can look into The doctor's background by calling the local branch of the AMA. Persuade or Fast Talk can be used to discover that the man is a gifted surgeon, but has been barred from further practice. No one admits anything, but rumors indicate the man made several disfiguring surgical errors while drugged up on his own favorite pharmaceuticals.

Doctor Ruggerio's address can be found in the local phone book. If they stake the place out, the investigators are rewarded when Childe arrives carrying his briefcase and an overnight bag. Ruggerio, a short, balding man with dark skin, greets Childe at the door. He talks with his visitor for a few moments before they go inside. If someone is close enough to make a Listen roll, or electronic devices are employed, snatches of the conversation are heard. Ruggerio asks Childe if he is sure he really wants to go through with this thing. What if the thing doesn't work?

Childe replies that he's sure.

The operation takes some six hours during which time Ruggerio is assisted by his wife, a trained nurse. Simon is not seen again until the next day when he emerges from the house looking shaky and weak. His eyes are protected by a pair of mirrored sunglasses. He is helped to a waiting cab by the doctor and his wife.

If the doctor is interviewed, he admits to nothing. Ruggerio cannot be threatened, fast talked or bribed. He just won't talk. His wife, Ellen, is just as adamant.

If the doctor's house is broken into and searched a surgical suite is found in the basement behind a heavy, locked door. A Spot Hidden roll locates the sterile pouch from Simon's briefcase that once contained the black orb. In a small refrigerator is a specimen jar containing a single human eyeball (lose 0/1 Sanity points). Investigators making an Idea roll realize this is Simon's eye.

There is a 35% chance the doctor discovers the investigators snooping in his surgery. His surgery is illegal and he hesitates to call the police. Law can be used to make him tell the investigators that he replaced Simon's left eye with a small black device. Simon claimed it would automatically bond with his optic nerve but the doctor is doubtful. If the investigators describe the small black orb they found in Simon's briefcase, the doctor identifies it as the thing he put in Simon's head.

If the investigators follow Simon's cab he sees them. He has the driver drop him off at a subway station and begins changing trains until he loses the investigators. It is important that Simon drop out of sight for a while.

The FBI

The Federal Government is on Simon Childe's trail. An agent, accompanied by a special Project ODIN security adjunct, arrives in town just shortly after the investigators meet with Childe. The agents believe that Childe intends to sell the prototype to a foreign power; they have no idea he intends to have ODIN implanted in his own eye socket. If they discover the investigators' involvement in the case they interview them but probably do not seriously consider them suspects. But this pair of agents can be used to enliven things if the action grows dull. The agents surely put in an appearance at the end of the scenario, during the political rally.

Sam Fobes, senior FBI agent

Fobes is tall with sandy, thinning hair. He wears black Ray-Bans at all times. He is big enough to fill most doorways, a fact he uses to intimidate suspects whenever possible.

STR 17	CON 15	SIZ 17	INT 10	POW 9
DEX 11	APP 9	EDU 16	SAN 50	HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapons: Fist/Punch 75%, 1D3+db; Kick 60%, 1D6+db; .38 Automatic 60%, 1D10.

Skills: Accounting 50%, Bargain 40%, Camouflage 35%, Climb 51%, Credit Rating 65%, Dodge 35%, Drive Auto 60%, Fast Talk 40%, Law 65%, Lean on Witness/Suspect 75%, Listen 63%, Spot Hidden 43%, Track 37%.

Milton Jaines, ODIN security

Jaines is thin and whip-like, his hair slicked back and dark enough to appear blue. He is an expert in techniques of silent death, and kills indifferently. He's been deep security so long he has little sense of what it's like to lead a normal life. Jaines has an insightful intelligence, able to take in situations quickly. He is probably the only person the investigators are likely to encounter that will take talk of alien intelligences seriously.

STR 16	CON 14	SIZ 11	INT 18	POW 7
DEX 17	APP 7	EDU 18	SAN 30	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 65%, 1D3+db; .38 Automatic 70%, 1D10; Knife 65%, 1D6+db.

Skills: Accounting 55%, Bargain 45%, Camouflage 60%, Climb 65%, Credit Rating 50%, Dodge 70%, Drive Auto 55%, Fast Talk 65%, Law 60%, Listen 70%, Spot Hidden 75%, Torture 80%.

Interview with Ted McKinney

THE investigators receive another visit from the man in the black. He explains that Schneider has somehow wangled them a chance to interview Senator McKinney in his home. The investigators are supplied with phony credentials linking them to a well-known national newspaper. The man in black tells them

that it is believed that incriminating evidence might be found in the Senator's bedroom.

McKinney's house is a sprawling ersatz colonial located on the coast overlooking the sea. Inside the house is empty--lonely feeling. Once cleared by security the investigators are met at the front door by a smiling, gracious McKinney. As agreed upon, there will be no video equipment allowed, although voice recording and still photography is permissible.

Early into the interview investigators notice something wrong. The Senator shows signs of mental fatigue, often losing the thread of his idea in mid-sentence.

Within moments, McKinney is up and fixing himself a drink, asking if the investigators would like anything. He dismisses the security guard, telling him to return in about an hour. The man leaves reluctantly, shooting a warning glance at the investigators. Once the guard leaves, McKinney begins drinking himself into a stupor, soon becoming incoherent. A half-hour later he has fallen asleep on the couch leaving the investigators to their own devices.

Looking around the house, they find a place lavishly appointed with a combination of priceless antiques and high-dollar consumer items. Despite this, the house somehow seems empty, unused.

In McKinney's bedroom Spot Hidden rolls find a still camera mounted in the ceiling operated by switches concealed in a nightstand next to the bed.

A small sitting room connected to the bedroom has been converted into a combination photo file and viewing room. The door is secured with a dead-bolt lock; the only key is in McKinney's pocket.

Inside is a large comfortable chair and a small desk with a gently angled top and a number of shallow drawers. Nearby is a well-stocked wet bar. A half-finished bourbon, ice long melted, stands on the desk.

The desk drawers are found stuffed with photos featuring Ted McKinney and one or more women engaging in intimate activities. Know rolls identify a number of photos featuring Ted with his two past wives. A few photos show Ted together with Miranda Sharpe. Ms. Sharpe does not seem aware that she is being photographed. There are no negatives stored here, only prints.

Keeping track of the time, the investigators should be able to get back to the living room before the guard returns. In the event they are caught snooping around they will probably be warned and escorted from the property.

Blowing the Whistle

If the investigators smuggle out some of the incriminating photographs they may take them to the newspapers. The *Herald* is a conservative newspaper with the widest circulation in the city. Staunch supporters of Ted McKinney, if the editors at this paper are shown the photographs they express interest and pay high prices for them. But their intent is to return them to McKinney and bury the story. Psychology rolls reveal the editors' intent. The police are then informed, told that the investigators stole things from the McKinney house, and the investigators are from here on out under the close scrutiny of the law.

The *Record* is a smaller, more liberal paper. The publisher hates the McKinney family, viewing them as symbols of the failure of modern society to take care of the less fortunate. If the investigators place a call to the *Record* the editor indicates that he is interested, then asks them to hold a moment. When he gets back to them he tells them that he's ready to buy and print anything, as long as it's damaging to McKinney. If the investigators meet with the editor it is obvious that he is truly interested in publishing the photos. He concedes that the photos might have be somewhat censored when they see print but he promises that no one will be able to mistake McKinney, or what he is up to.

A Psychology roll reveals the editor is hiding something, but it is not clear exactly what.

The photos are published the next day but any that showed Miranda Sharpe are either absent or so heavily censored that she is unrecognizable. Should they contact the editor, he pretends not to know the investigators and refuses to meet with them. The editor is actually a supporter and good friend of Miranda Sharpe. Anything he learned about the investigators has been passed along to her.

If the photos are made public, Ted McKinney is ruined. His personal campaign to return to the senate grinds to a halt and he disappears from the public eye. Several days later McKinney dies in an automobile accident, his car plunging over a bridge, his young female companion barely escaping with her life. She testifies at the inquest that she is sure the senator steered the car off the road on purpose.

Brandon McKinney Enters the Race

If Ted McKinney's campaign has been wiped out, the Republicans counter with McKinney's younger brother, Brandon. Youthful, more energetic, unsullied by public revelation of private indiscretion, Brandon hits the ground running. A massive public relations campaign vaults Brandon into a small lead but the media battle has only begun. Miranda's TV spots appear with greater frequency. Investigators familiar with video production, or who make a roll of EDU x1 or less realize that something has been done to these spots. They seem to evoke an unnatural compulsion in viewers. Voters flock toward the candidate, abandoning McKinney.

Soon, everyone in the state, no matter what their political leanings, comes to believe the actress and her message of government aid for the poor, for the disadvantaged, the disenfranchised, or anyone with a gripe against society. They are promised vindication! Vindication by

The Companions of Lyr

Some people don't buy Miranda Sharpe's image, or her message. Chief among them is a distorted, insane fraternity calling itself the Companions of Lyr. An all-male fringe group dedicated to purging all female influence from the government and business, they have threatened candidate Sharpe with assassination. Nothing is known about them. Their warning appears, receives intense coverage by the media for several days, then is forgotten.

Miranda Sharpe and her plans to set the world right! The time has come! All will be satisfied!

The investigators, like many other people, are able to shake off the effects (at a cost of 1D3 Sanity points) but the vast majority of the electorate support her. Regardless, the investigators have completed their assignment and within several days each receives in the mail a check for the remainder of their fees.

The Man in Black Returns

UNEXPECTEDLY, the stretch limo and its dark clad driver show up as the investigators are walking down the street. Pulling up to the curb he invites them into the car.

As soon as they are seated he hands each one an envelope containing a crisp new $1000 bill. "This is a tax free advance," he says. "We've got another job for you." He hands over an envelope containing a dossier on Simon Childe complete with photo.

"This guy's been asking a lot of questions about Sharpe. We don't know how he figures in—we'd like you to check it out. Word has it that he stole something from the feds, something real valuable. So they're looking for him."

The man pushes a button on the dash and a panel on one wall of the passenger compartment slides back to reveal a small video screen. The face of attorney Edwin Schneider appears on the screen.

"Greetings my friends. Our employers are happy with the job you did, but the campaign is not working out as we had hoped. We want you (he points toward his viewers) to continue in our employ. Your efforts are needed to ensure that Miranda Sharpe is not elected. I believe your road may be bumpier from here on out." Schneider's face shows concern.

"Let me offer one bit of advice. The democratic party is staging an extended rally and celebration later this week to commend Ms. Sharpe on her apparent success. This event may provide you with unforeseen opportunities. Good luck."

The video cuts off abruptly and snow fills the tiny screen. The car stops and the investigators find they have been delivered to their original destination. The man in black bids them goodbye, then drives away.

Television

Calls made to local TV stations elicit little or no interest in the Nightingale video. All staunchly support the democratic candidate.

Calls to national 'sleaze news' programs are considerably more productive. Assuming the investigators are able to get there, an appointment can be set up as early as that same afternoon in New York City at the offices of *National Inquiries*, a syndicated daily news show.

At the producer's office the investigators are treated well, served coffee or soft drinks by a pretty girl in a spotted dress.

The producer is a smiling, handsome man in his early forties named Manny Lovett. He introduces himself and asks the investigators to have a seat.

"I've asked somebody else to sit in on our meeting, I hope you don't mind.

A door opens and Miranda Sharpe enters the office. Her cold eyes sweep across the investigators, memorizing each of their faces. Though frightening, she is beautiful. Tension mounts as she studies the faces of her accusers. Finally she smiles, shattering the awful moment, and shakes hands with everyone.

It should be borne in mind that Miranda is now the hands-down media favorite in this race. Her tendrils of influence are everywhere. No one in the media has any desire to betray her.

The creature within Miranda is fully alert, its electromagnetic field at maximum strength. All digital equipment and storage media, including watches, computer hard disks, floppy disks and video tapes within fifty feet of her are blanked, including the tape the investigators have brought to sell the producer.

Miranda asks to view the infamous tape immediately —she wants to know exactly what she is accused of. Lovett suggest they all take seats in the next room to view the tape.

When viewed, the tape bears nothing other than glittering video snow. Miranda rises and leaves wordlessly as soon as it is obvious the video has been erased.

Any credibility the investigators may have had with the television media has been shattered. They are shown out curtly by a burly security guard and warned never to call again.

Silver Arm Commodities

SILVER Arm Commodities is actually a business front for the Companions of Lyr, a way to move money without attracting attention. If the phone number is called, a man answers: "Sean O'Finn's Tam." If the investigators ask for Silver Arm Commodities they are told that no one is in the office at the moment and are asked to leave their phone number. The investigator hears music and loud talk in the background.

The Companions of Lyr were once an Irish Nationalist Group dedicated to the freeing of Northern Ireland from British Rule. Protected by the management of Sean O'Finn's, they carried out their illegal gun-running activities from the tavern's back room. Silver Arms Commodities is the business front they established in order to cover their activities.

Although the management (and even some of the regular patrons) have long known about and supported their efforts to free Ireland, they would be appalled to learn that the Companions have changed their goals and are now conducting terrorist activities within their own city. Sean O'Finn's Tam is listed in the phone book under taverns. It is located along the waterfront in an Irish section of town. Unknown to the Companions, Miranda Sharpe has been secretly funneling money to them, actually funding their attempts to assassinate her in an effort to pick up even more votes.

Sean O'Finn's Tam

The Tam is an unpleasant place with cheap Irish decorations tacked up in no discernible pattern and with a floor unpleasantly greasy and sticky. The bartender is a short stocky fellow, with blank eyes and a severely broken nose. His thinning red hair is unwashed. Fast Talk is all that's required to get admittance into the back room, the 'office' of Silver Arms Commodities. Stepping into the cramped room the investigators encounter 2D4 Companions of Lyr along with their leader, Cobra O'Brien. If a female investigator is with the group they face difficulties. Unless a Fast Talk or Persuade is made, O'Brien refuses to speak with them and has them shown out of his office. The Companions have no respect for women. Males will have to bluff them that any women along are merely girl friends, not serious associates.

Cobra O'Brien

O'Brien is stocky, about five feet, six inches tall with auburn, unruly hair and a wealth of freckles. He can seem friendly, but only as long as the person he's speaking with says what O'Brien wants to hear. Disagreements swiftly escalate to arguments, arguments to fights, and fights to deadly violence. It is said the Cobra beat his last girlfriend to death. He hates women but tolerates them for the occasional pleasures they bring.

Cobra O'Brien is the only Companion who actually talks to the investigators, the rest of the gang are dull supernumeraries. In any discussion O'Brien admits nothing in connection with the death of Schneider. If asked about Miranda Sharpe the insane gang leader turns uncomfortable, becomes cagey. He is concerned that his plans to assassinate the candidate may have leaked out.

The only real clue laying about is a ream of letterhead, a business checkbook, and some sloppy, hand-written balance sheets for Silver Arm Commodities, Ltd. If investigators get a chance to peruse these (possibly by breaking into the office later) an Accounting roll notes that Silver Arm is a front O'Brien uses for paying bills, acquiring raw materials--explosives and ammunition--without drawing attention to the Companions. The same Accounting roll deduces the check book needs a good auditing or Silver Arm is going to run up big red numbers soon.

The Companions of Lyr Strike

A news item reaches the investigators. Attorney Edwin Schneider is dead, the victim of a car bomb. The Companions of Lyr are claiming responsibility. A picture shows the blasted cinders of Schneider's car and a glimpse of his charred body. Lose 1/1D2 Sanity points.

In a statement released to the media the Companions claim that Schneider was helping Miranda Sharpe's campaign. Specifically, the photos used to destroy Ted McKinney's campaign were brought to light through efforts made by the well-known lawyer.

The overall effect of this murder and subsequent announcement is to rally the party and the whole state even more strongly behind the female candidate.

As the investigators absorb this story, a knock comes at the door. They at first barely recognize the caller. It is the man in black, his hair a mess, his sunglasses missing, one eye swollen shut and bruised. He holds his side and blood is seen soaking his shirt and coat. The man in black seats himself heavily and smiles crookedly, revealing several missing teeth.

"The boss wanted you to know about Silver Arm Commodities. Sharpe's been giving them money—lot's of it. Thinks it had something to do with the campaign. Now the boss is dead. Thought I'd let you know while I could. Those punks, I'm gonna. . ." The man in black coughs, and blood streams darkly from his nose and mouth.

"See if you can figure out what the boss was onto. Goodbye."

His head slumps forward. First Aid is useless, the man is dead. A search of his pockets turns up nothing but a slip of paper with the words: "Silver Arm Commodities" and a local phone number.

Stored in a smaller room behind O'Brien's office are a number of illegal automatic weapons—mostly machine pistols—along with plenty of 9-mm ammunition and materials for making pipe bombs. A spot Hidden roll in the back room locates a quarter pound of C9 plastic explosives and three radio-control detonators.

It is quite possible that the Companions of Lyr, fearing they may be exposed, track the investigators down and attack them in their homes or places of business. The Companions are practiced killers, using 9-mm handguns with high capacity magazines and noise suppressors. The Companions live for machismo, but are not completely foolish. They disguise themselves as hotel workers or meter readers while closing in on investigators. Most of these guys are ignorant scum. Products of the worst impulses of society, they are unwashed, unshaven, and inarticulate. They come in various shapes and sizes, but inside are much alike, empty souls and empty minds.

The Rally

THE party rally to show unity for the candidate is scheduled to take place in the new William Cullen Bryant Convention Hall located downtown. General information on the hall can be acquired from the Chamber of Commerce including the names of the hall's administrator and its security manager. A call to the office is answered with "Bryant Hall, what can I do for ya'?" in a laconic, drowsy voice.

Administrator Phyllis Fields doesn't have much time and transfers calls to the appropriate person at the earliest lull in the conversation. In this case, J. J. Turk, the Security Manager. She can tell investigators that the hall has been hired for one week by the state Democratic party for the purpose of confirming Miranda Sharpe's nomination to the Senate race. If investigators are interested in attending they are immediately transferred to Ticket Reservations. Getting back to Security from Tickets is impossible, another call must be made. General Admittance to the convention is inexpensive at $15 per ticket.

Security Manager J. J. Turk was named after his mother's favorite movie, *Jeremiah Johnson*. Turk reacts negatively to investigators hammering him with suspicions about the candidate. He is a Sharpe supporter.

The Rally Begins

Using a new tactic, the party has decided to erect information booths for each plank of its platform—similar to a trade show. Each booth is manned by attractive public relations professionals and it is impossible to pass through this area without interference from well-meaning booth people. Most of the issues are bland party-line ideas indistinguishable from those presented by the opposition.

The party has also put together video presentations. A number of large screen displays cycle loops of tape featuring non-intellectual, hyper-emotional image bites promoting the standard planks of the party platform. One especially well-mounted display features an impassioned speech by Miranda Sharpe covering the issues "as she sees them." Any investigator familiar with video production techniques notices a subtle alteration of the audio tracks. Miranda's voice seems to carry a power more than human.

Simon Childe Attends

Simon Childe, still wearing his mirrored sunglasses, moves stealthily among the crowd, avoiding drawing any attention to himself. He carries with him the notebook computer stolen from the government. Simon has been using his time making genetic profiles of Miranda using ODIN's waveform imaging capabilities. These have been fed into the Genome Map program.

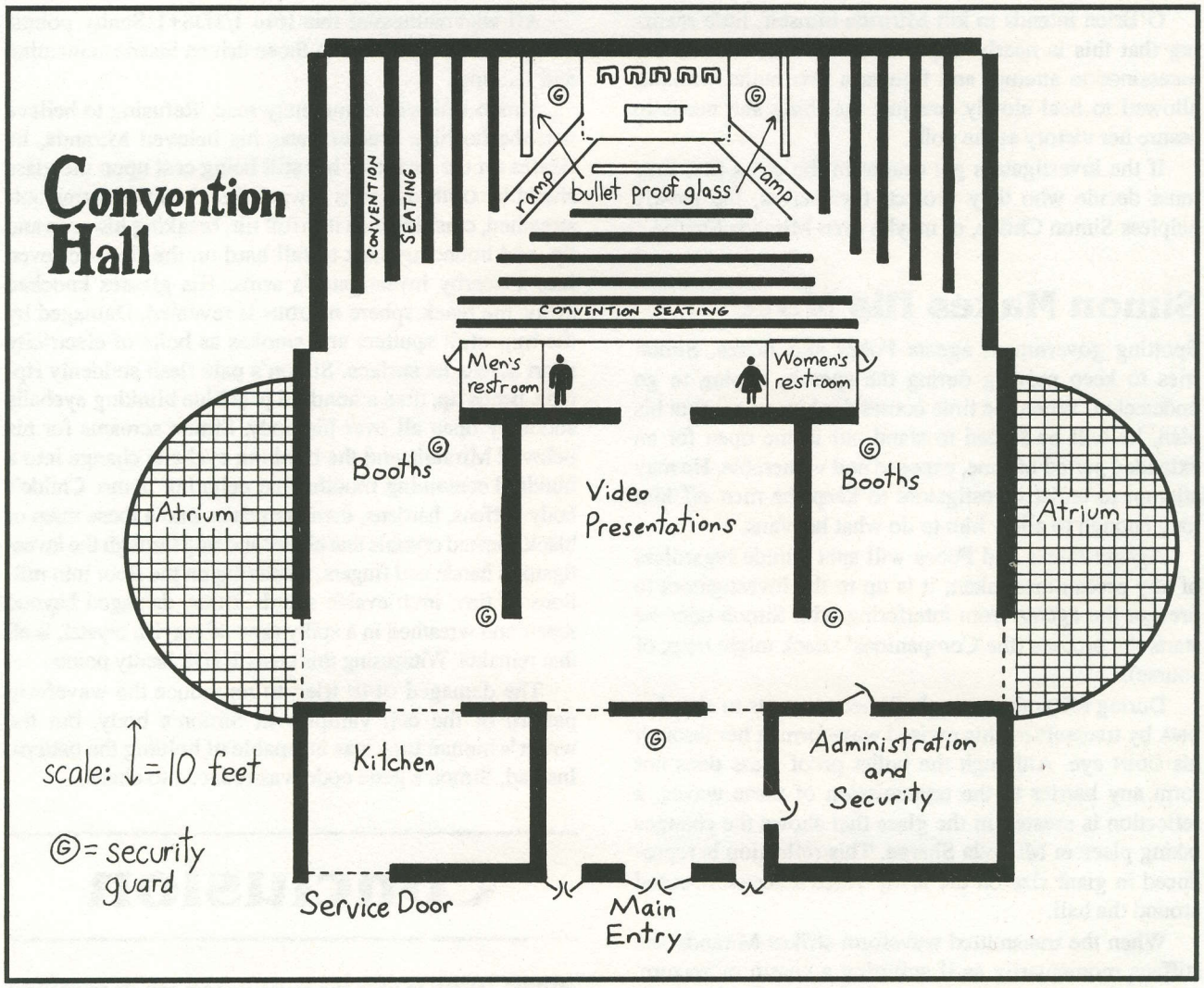
If an investigator can Sneak up behind Childe they can see the image on the Pocket Cray's screen. It is the Genome Map program and it displays the outline of a woman. A bar of distortion scans the image up and down, apparently making minute adjustments with each pass. Oddly, the image seems to always correct itself, returning its original configuration as soon as the bar passes. Noticing this requires a successful Computer Use roll.

Simon studies the screen intently. With each pass of the scanning bar his face brightens with hope then changes to worry as the image corrects itself. At some point he pulls his mirrored glasses down to peer at the screen with his ODIN eye. A Spot Hidden roll allows a nearby investigator to see the black orb in Childe's eye socket. Lose 1/1D2 Sanity points.

After consulting a much-worn computer printout Simon turns back to the screen. A faint vector of reddish light leaps between his black left eye and the receptor jack on the left side of the display screen. He mumbles with determination, "Change, damn you, change and purify. It is time for Miranda to return."

The distortion bar brightens, slows, and passes with deliberation over the image on the screen. This time the image remains changed and does not revert to its former state.

Investigators who buttonhole Simon find him more than willing to explain his plan. Simon is persuasive. He explains that his plan may be the only way to prevent the inhuman thing inside Miranda from reaching the Senate. He provides them with a computer printout that he says proves his point. A successful Computer Use roll verifies what Simon has told them. A Fast Talk or Persuade roll warms him up and he hands over a computer printout of specifications for ODIN, hoping it will serve to back up his wild claims.



Miranda Speaks

Sharpe is introduced to the crowd. Stepping out through the curtains lining the back of the podium she steps to the microphone, taking her position behind a wall of bullet proof glass. Miranda's proposals add up to a platform that promises state and social unity. "Everyone will be taken care of—even *you*." Behind her, fifteen-foot video projections expand her presence. The camera focuses on her sincere face as she conveys her message with power and confidence, simultaneously using her image alteration ability to subtly manipulate her features.

"I have come before the people of my state many times, asking them to realize the plight of the disadvantaged among us. Who will care for them, who will reach out for them, if we do not, if every one of us does not join the fight, if every one of us does not turn our attention from the petty concerns of our lives, from our day-to-day concerns and join together to help those around us who cannot help themselves, then how do we dare to call ourselves human? How can any of us fail to hear the cries of those who have not received even a little material comfort? How can we fail to act in the light of this need? I come before you, asking you to help me win a seat in the U.S. Senate. I come before you to ask your empowerment to smooth the troubles of our time and of our state. . ."

As well as any politician, Miranda speaks without ever really saying anything, constantly working over the guilt and fears of the crowd until the rally turns into a frenzy.

The Assassins Strike!

The Companions of Lyr wait for Miranda to start her speech but the keeper should determine the exact moment they make their move against the rally.

The Companions enter dramatically, blowing a hole in the wall with C9 charges before wading into the crowded hall firing machine pistols. The Companions are not interested in wholesale slaughter and fire random bursts into the air trying to make their way toward Sharpe. Although they do not attack investigators unless threatened by them, security men are sitting ducks.

O'Brien intends to kill Miranda himself, little realizing that this is nearly impossible. Miranda expects the assassination attempt and figures a few bullet wounds, allowed to heal slowly, are just the thing she needs to assure her victory at the polls.

If the investigators get caught in the cross fire, they must decide who they protect: themselves, the mostly helpless Simon Childe, or maybe even Miranda Sharpe.

Simon Makes His Move

Spotting government agents Fobes and Jaines, Simon tries to keep moving during the speech, hoping to go undetected. When the time comes for him to execute his plan, he will be forced to stand out in the open for an extended period of time, exposed and vulnerable. He may attempt to enlist investigators to keep the men off him long enough to allow him to do what he plans.

Agents Jaines and Fobes will spot Childe regardless of any precautions taken; it is up to the investigators to prevent the agents from interfering with Simon once he starts the process (the Companions' attack might help, of course).

During Miranda's speech, Simon attempts to alter her DNA by transmitting his revised waveform at her through his ODIN eye. Although the bullet proof glass does not form any barrier to the transmission of these waves, a reflection is created in the glass that shows the changes taking place in Miranda Sharpe. This reflection is reproduced in giant size on the many video screens mounted around the hall.

When the transmitted waveform strikes Miranda she stiffens momentarily as if suffering a spasm or seizure. Then a long, unearthly howl escapes her mouth, amplified by the hall's sound system. All hearing this suffer a loss of 1/1D3 Sanity points.

The waveform image on the bulletproof glass remains the same, a clear image of a perfect and beautiful Miranda as she once appeared. But Miranda herself is gripped with pain as her body writhes and distorts, her skin flowing and running as the waveform image held in her cells comes unglued. Memories and patterns of her past victims emerge, her body changes, shifting from one person to another. Anyone she has killed during the scenario makes a brief appearance. The young man from the snuff film comes into being, then disappears. Soon no more humans are seen and the parade of past victims displays weird alien shapes that flicker briefly into view.

Still Simon bears down with his information beam, waiting for the hellish, changing thing to match the pale ghostly image splashed upon the glass. Finally, the cell vampire is revealed in its natural form—a writhing heap of ropes and tubes spotted with mouths and eyes. Revealed in its natural form, exposed to human scrutiny, the creature shifts itself out of this dimension, disappearing forever.

All who witnessed this lose 1/1D8+1 Sanity points. The hall is in a panic with those driven insane screaming and fainting.

Simon is driven completely mad. Refusing to believe that the horrible creature was his beloved Miranda, he fixates on the image of her still being cast upon the glass shield by ODIN. He runs toward the glass with arms outstretched, crashing into it at full tilt, breaking his nose and lip, and bouncing back to fall hard on the floor--or even into a nearby investigator's arms. His glasses knocked away, the black sphere of ODIN is revealed. Damaged by the impact, it sputters and smokes as bolts of electricity short across its surface. Simon's pale flesh suddenly ripples, beads up, then a hundred pale blue blinking eyeballs suddenly open all over his body. Simon screams for his beloved Miranda and the blinking eyeballs change into a hundred screaming mouths that echo her name. Childe's body stiffens, hardens, then granulates into a loose mass of black, faceted crystals that clatter and ring through the investigator's hands and fingers, shattering on the floor into millions of tiny, irretrievable shards. ODIN, damaged beyond repair and wreathed in a spiky rime of grayish crystal, is all that remains. Witnessing this costs 1/1D8 Sanity points.

The damaged ODIN tried to reproduce the waveform pattern of the cell vampire in Simon's body, but the writer's human DNA was incapable of holding the pattern. Instead, Simon's gene code was reduced to chaos.

Conclusion

THERE is little the investigators can do to prevent the horrible events at the close of the rally. Perhaps they can end up helping Simon, since he is determined to run his experiment, and return Miranda to humanity. Once he has made his gene studies of the cell vampire, all he needs to do is look at her once to start the mind wrenching chain of events.

Aftermath

Although there were plenty of witnesses to the final events, the insanity and ensuing panic distorts information making it hard to get a clear story of what happened. No video record remains as in its last moments the cell vampire's highly charged electromagnetic field wiped all the tapes as well as Simon's computer's memory.

Those few witnesses capable of making rational statements claim that something strange occurred at the end of Ms. Sharpe's speech but authorities, unable to explain or understand exactly what happened, make all attempts to suppress the more extravagant claims. The investigators probably cannot be implicated, though their involvement almost guarantees that some arm of the government begins keeping dossiers on them. Whatever it was that hap-

Simon Childe reduced to chaos

pened defies explanation and after a while the media stops trying, diverting its attention to simpler matters.

Fobes and Jaines, if they survive, lay claim to the inert Pocket Cray and ODIN. If they are aware of the investigators' involvement they may haul them in for questioning and begin running background checks. In an effort to quell publicity it is likely that they decline to charge the investigators with any crimes.

Any surviving Companions of Lyr are hunted down and either arrested or killed.

Brandon McKinney goes on to win the campaign but two months later, after the partially mummified body of his mother is discovered in the basement of the family mansion, he is charged with her murder. Losing his mind, the Senator is locked away in an expensive sanitorium. Within a few months Sharpe is all but forgotten, remembered by only a few fans of B-movies who can still find her on the back shelves of video rental stores.

Rewards

Investigators who understand how narrowly mankind escaped the clutches of the possessed Miranda Sharpe are rewarded with 2D8+2 Sanity points.

Statistics

Miranda Sharpe, the people's choice

STR 20	CON 24	SIZ 9 I	NT 17	POW 22
DEX 26	APP 18	EDU 19	SAN 0	HP 18

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: None, but all weapons inflict minimum damage. Miranda can regenerate up to 10 hit points per round.

Weapons: Bite 75%, 1D6+1D4; Knife 75%, 1D4+2+db; Life Drain 90% 1D8 STR each round.

Skills: Accounting 58%, Alter Image 85%*, Bargain 65%, Climb 43%, Debate 78%, Fast Talk 81%, Hide 55%, Law 68%, Listen 47%, Pose Attractively 72%, Psychology 90%, Sneak 39%, Spot Hidden 58%, Throw 41%.

*Use of this skill requires the expenditure of 1 magic point.

Simon Childe, unrequited madman

STR 8	CON 10	SIZ 15	INT 17	POW 11
DEX 14	APP 13	EDU 21	SAN 5	HP 10

Damage Bonus: 0

Weapons: 9mm Automatic 35%, 1D10.

Skills: Accounting 68%, Astronomy 51%, Bargain 63%, Biology 55%, Brood Endlessly 90%, Computer Use 78%, Credit Rating 75%, Debate 45%, Drive Automobile 55%, Electrical Repair 40%, Electronics 35%, Fast Talk 65%, First Aid 60%, Hide 35%, History 65%, Law 20%, Library Use 50%, Mechanical Repair 50%, Oratory 45%, Photography 58%, Physics 31%, Psychology 41%, Sneak 25%, Spot Hidden 59%, Throw 48%.

Jackson "Cobra" O'Brien, 38, radical caudillo and murderer.

STR 16	CON 14	SIZ 11	INT 13	POW 9
DEX 15	APP 13	EDU 14	SAN 20	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 75%, 1D3+db; Kick 65%, 1D6+db; 12-gauge Shotgun 45%, 4D6/2D6/1D6; Machine Pistol 55%, 1D10.

Skills: Bargain 79%, Credit Rating 52%, Debate 25%, Dodge 90%, Drive Motorcycle 39%, Fast Talk 65%, Jump 57%, Law 50%, Listen 61%, Oratory 75%, Plant Bomb 82%, Psychology 69%, Spot Hidden 45%.

Typical Companion of Lyr

STR 15	CON 16	SIZ 13	INT 10	POW 14
DEX 11	APP 9	EDU 8	SAN 35	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 65%, 1D3+db; .32 Automatic 50%, 1D8; Machine Pistol 45%, 1D10.

Skills: Dodge 30%, Drive Motorcycle 45%, Jump 60%, Listen 50%, Plant Bomb 55%, Spot Hidden 50%.

Typical Convention Hall Guard

STR 15	CON 15	SIZ 12	INT 10	POW 10
DEX 14	APP 12	EDU 13	SAN 55	HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 8 Point Kevlar Vest.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 70%, 1D3+db; .45 Revolver 75%, 1D10+2; Machine Pistol 65%, 1D10.

Skills: Dodge 70%, First Aid 55%, Hide 60%, Listen 55%, Martial Arts 70%, Sneak 65%. ■

Fractal Gods

"Beyond the mundane worlds of man are countless other dimensions and planes of existence. Some are inhabited by terrible creatures, monsters of horrid appearance and ghoulish habits. Others are wondrous realms filled with forms of life too bizarre to comprehend."

Monstres and Their Kynde

ALTHOUGH set in Boston and Houston, keepers should find little difficulty moving this scenario to different locations.

Keeper's Information

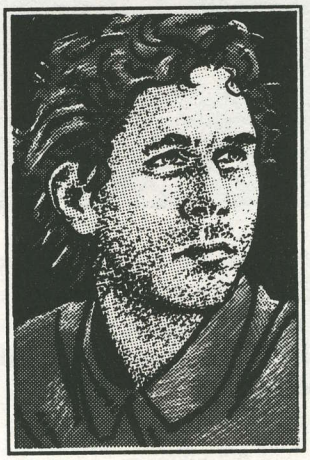
Six months ago Yan Mueller, a computer artist residing in Boston, received an old diary written in fragmented German from an uncle he never knew. The diary chronicled an exploration into dimensions other than those known to science, and demonstrated the repetitive and unusual mathematics required to achieve this end.

It was rubbish, of course, but Mueller was intrigued. He felt it might form the basis for an unusual graphic. After a month of solid programming, Mueller sat back to watch his computer produce a strange fractal. It was more than a simple fractal, Mueller's program had opened a one-way gate from an alternate dimension. As he watched, something entered, something intelligent—a fractal gatherer.

Fractals

Fractals are mathematical shapes of infinite complexity created by computers. No matter at what scale they are drawn, a fractal always has the same resolution. The name 'fractal' was coined by Benoit Mandelbrot, discoverer of the most famous fractal of all: the Mandelbrot Set (M-Set).

Discovered in 1980, the M-Set describes the boundary of a simple equation, but the boundary itself is infinitely complicated. Until the advent of computers, the sheer number of calculations required to form a simple plot of the Mandelbrot Set meant that its strange beauty remained hidden. Now, the M-Set and others like it can be mapped by a new breed of intrepid explorer working from his computer terminal.



Yan Mueller

Mueller sat helplessly as the alien entity surged into his mind. It took a week before the gatherer learned enough to communicate with the human it had entered. Poor Mueller was in no position to argue as the gatherer suggested they work at sending it back to its home dimension. Occupation by the alien had already sent him sliding into madness.

Together the alien and Mueller scanned the program, and developed the basis for a new gate. They needed a faster computer, a mainframe at least. The only person Mueller felt might be able to help them was the editor of *Fractal Gods* magazine, Julia Burnet in Houston. She had access to a mainframe and the skills to use it. To attract her to New York Mueller, aided by the gatherer, constructed the Other Beacons program. Installed in the mainframe Burnet had access to, the program would create a two-way gate opening on the fractal's home world.

Unfortunately, when Burnet received Other Beacons she did not let it run its full course before slipping it straight into the latest issue of *Fractal Gods*. Subscribers, upon receiving their copies, were not so lucky.

The Suicide

After receiving the latest issue of *Fractal Gods*, 17-year-old Jon Lathan ran to the desktop PC in his basement study, eager for his fix of the latest in computer graphics. Browsing through the fanzine he eventually found the Other Beacons program. He let it run.

Jon Lathan

As planned, Other Beacons opened a gate. As the program ran its course, slowly forming the beacon, something else took an interest in the gate. This ma-

A Timeline of Recent Events

6 months ago: Yan Mueller receives mysterious diary.

2 months ago: Mueller finishes translation and begins programming.

1 month ago: The gatherer fractal enters our dimension.

10 days ago: Julia Burnet receives Other Beacons program written by Yan Mueller.

6 days ago: Jon Lathan receives *Fractal Gods #12*, the marauder enters our dimension.

1 day ago: Jon Lathan commits suicide.

Present: Investigators introduced to the scenario. Kathi Lathan purchases new computer.

rauder surged through Jon's computer, and pushed its way into this world. It perceived Jon Lathan both as a source of energy and as a means to return to its own dimension. The marauder invaded Lathan's mind and took over his body. Jon passed out.

Actually taking control of a human proved more complicated than the marauder had anticipated. When Jon recovered, he suffered intense visions, results of partial mental contact with the alien entity. He soon became withdrawn and depressed, intensely suicidal. Jon attacked his computer, dismantling it in a destructive rage. Something was burning him inside, but he didn't know what. Five days later he wrote a note to his parents (The Fractal Papers #1) then killed himself.

The marauder fled his dying body, taking up temporary residence in the neighbors' dog before eventually entering and controlling Jon's mother, Kathi Lathan.

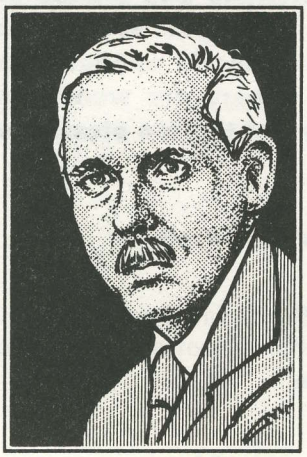
Introducing the Investigators

The case may be brought to the investigators' attention in several ways.

- ☐ Experienced and well-known investigators, with an agent and possibly even financial backing, receive a letter from Jon Lathan. It arrives the morning following his suicide (see The Fractal Papers #2).
- ☐ A professional involved with the coroner's inquest and known to the investigators requests their help. This might be a policeman, doctor, pathologist, or teacher. Their suspicions are raised by the odd suicide note.
- ☐ One of the investigators is close to the Lathan family and is personally affected by Jon's death. This is particularly useful for rookie investigators involved in their first case.
- ☐ If the investigators are introduced in a way unrelated to the coroner's investigation or the Lathans, then they may find problems. Talk of sinister plots and cults only convinces Jon's father, Anthony Lathan, that the investigators are cranks, morbidly capitalizing on his grief.

Boston

THE Lathan's two-story house sits on Hollybrook Road in one of Boston's more pleasant suburbs. Mr. Lathan is an insurance broker, his wife an optician. Jon was their only child and his death has upset his parents deeply.



Anthony Lathan

Anthony Lathan

The father, Anthony Lathan, is most affected by Jon's death. A gray-haired insurance broker with an eye on early retirement, his son's suicide has brought him face-to-face with mortality, a subject uncomfortable to him. He drinks to accompany this new fascination with his own eventual fate.

Anthony has been feeling ill lately. He attributes this to stress. This is only partially true. At night, the marauder-being inhabiting his wife feeds on his energy (magic points), causing Lathan to feel lethargic, sick, and irritable.

Kathi Lathan

Kathi Lathan

Kathi hides her grief well, burying herself in her chores. In fact the marauder has taken control of Kathi and, patiently, pretends to be Kathi Lathan by day while working and feeding by night. A successful Psychology roll reveals that Kathi Lathan is suffering from intense pressure. Every now and again the marauder's control slips and stark terror appears in her eyes. But it lasts only for a moment.

The fractal creature is capable of altering Kathi Lathan's form, growing vicious claws and a long prehensile tongue capable of constricting a victim's throat.

The Study

Jon's study takes up most of the basement and contains two computers, a modem, a printer, several monitors, and a sound system. The work tops and shelves are covered

a suicide note

Dear Mom, Dear Dad,

It started a few days ago—the voice. It burns images into my soul. Blackened cities, twisted shells of buildings. Tortured souls penned for the spheres to feed on from between the planes. I've seen the images. The spheres. And it is true, the voice shows me.

I can stand it no more. The blackness taunts me so. It must go, I cannot stand it.

I love you.

chu htin llo han zob kzad

Forgive me, Jon.

The Fractal Papers #1

Jon Lathan's letter to the investigators

Dear Sirs,

I don't understand the pictures in my head and the voice in my soul. It torments and grinds. I see terrible things that I know are real.

chu htin llo han zob kzad

I don't know where this comes from. It burns in my mind. I don't understand.

Jon Lathan

The Fractal Papers #2

with disks, games and books. Across the room stands the Lathan's freezer.

One of the computers is a wreck. The casing has been prized away and the innards thoroughly scrambled. A large magnet sits in the wreckage, ruining everything. This is the remains of Jon's PC after his frenzied attack. A Spot Hidden roll reveals a disk still left in the drive. The disk is a copy of *Fractal Gods #12*. This copy is useless, the magnet has wiped the data, but the address of the magazine is printed on the disk, should the investigators wish to send for a copy.

The other computer is intact, and workable. This is Mrs. Lathan's new PC, the one she and the marauder work on every night. If the investigators check, they find only a few files on the hard disk. A mess of undisciplined programming, it is difficult to fathom its purpose. A successful Computer Use suggests that they might be graphics routines. Those who check, and make another Computer Use role find them similar to the Other Beacons program found in *Fractal Gods #12*. At any rate, the files are unfinished and will not run. Their dates indicate that they are updated overnight.

Another Spot Hidden reveals that the chant found on the suicide note is also scribbled on Jon's note pad. An Idea roll suggests that the investigators should look into Jon's recent schoolwork. Recent test papers and reports are also decorated with this odd chant.

The Freezer

At the bottom of the freezer are the remains of Toby, the neighbors' dog, and a stray cat. Both are dead, joined together by ropy tendrils sprouting from dead Toby's stomach. Following Jon's suicide, the fractal creature inhabited Toby's body, manipulating the dog's biology and merging it with a stray cat, in order to feed. When Kathi Lathan returned home from work that day, the fractal creature left the dog and inhabited the woman, leaving Toby to die. In Kathi Lathan's body, the fractal creature hid the incriminating evidence in the Lathan's freezer.

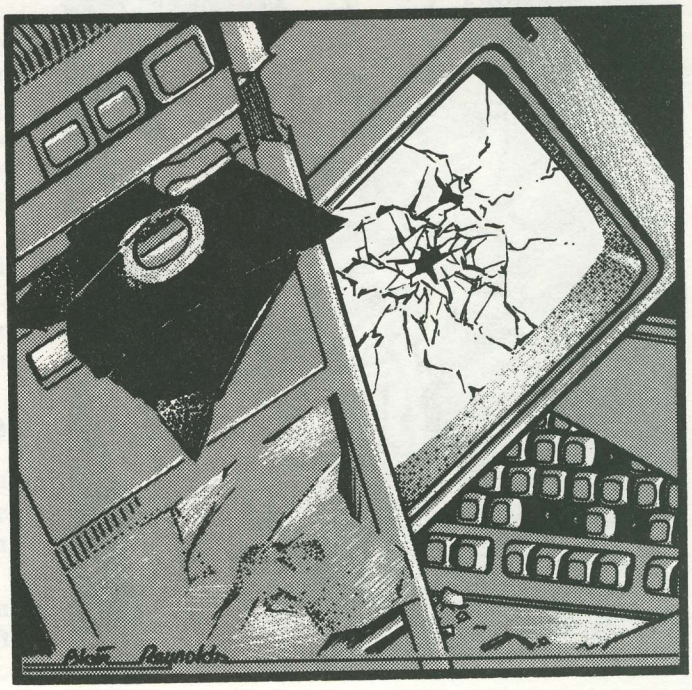
The Inquest

The inquest is held three days after Jon's body is found. It is informal and brief; all involved feel it a clear-cut case of suicide. The pathologist's report indicates that he died from a broken neck, induced while hanging himself from the stairs.

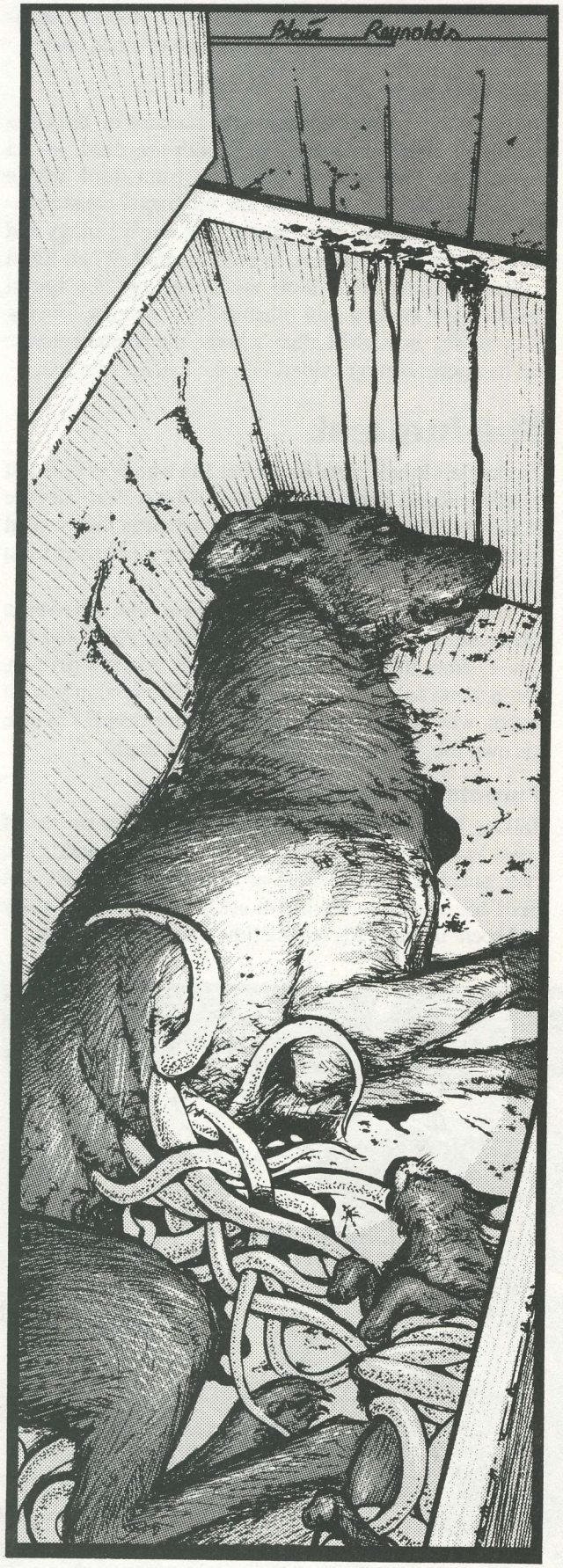
But no explanation of Jon's sudden odd behavior is advanced. Jon was an ordinary, intelligent youth and testimony from the school counsellor, his teachers, friends, and parents only add to the mystery. There simply is no reason why Jon should so suddenly have decided to take his own life. The whole affair is terribly tragic.

Parents and Friends

Talking to Jon's parents reveals that he was a normal, if quiet and often intense, youth. He liked football, girls, cars, and had a wide circle of friends. Most of all, Jon liked his computer. He had it set in his basement study and spent much of his leisure time there.



Jon's PC



Toby's Remains

Five days before his suicide he suddenly became withdrawn and depressed. He stopped visiting his study and spent most of his time in his room. Respecting his privacy, his parents never checked to see what he was up to. It was only after his death that the wallpaper by his bed was found to be covered in the same six meaningless words: "chu htin llo han zob kzad."

Jon's friends tell a similar story. Eric Miller, Jon's best friend, says that Jon claimed to be haunted by a vision—a blackened wasteland stalked by terrible gods preying on crippled survivors. He was disinterested in everything, and violently rejected anything to do with computers.

The Chant

Jon's chant—"chu htin llo han zob kzad"—is his attempt to realize the sounds and sensations caused by the marauder that inhabited his mind. Impossible to translate into English, a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll reveals that the chant is somehow connected with Yog-Sothoth.

If the investigators attempt to vocalize the chant and succeed in a POW x1 roll, they briefly receive hideous visions of an alien universe and a swirling mass of iridescent spheres—the dimension of Yog-Sothoth. The vision costs 1/1D10 Sanity points and increases Cthulhu Mythos by 2 percentiles.

Fractal Gods

FRACTAL Gods is a fanzine dedicated to computer graphics of all types. The editor is particularly fond of fractals, although the fanzine's contents usually consist of other pieces of art. *Fractal Gods* is published quarterly, sent to about 250 subscribers scattered across the globe. A typical issue consists of an editorial, letters, a few related articles and reviews, and the graphics themselves. The fanzine is available only on disk, hard copies can be printed by the readers should they desire. Fractal Gods is supplied in MS-DOS format to be run on any IBM PC or compatible.

Issue #12, the issue found in Lathan's computer drive, is available from the editor, Julia Burnet, of 1204 Morritt Avenue, Houston, Texas. A single issue costs $5.00 postpaid. A summary of issue #12's contents is provided (see the Fractal Papers #3).

Other Beacons

BEACONS.COM requires at least 10 Megabytes free disk space and VGA graphics to work. It takes almost two full minutes before anything appears on the screen.

The image on the screen is initially a disappointment—upon a black background a lurid multi-colour fractal sits in the middle of the screen. It is nothing special. The pattern in the middle of the fractal lacks rhyme

Insanities

Two forms of insanity suit themselves to this adventure. The first is a phobia, the second a mania.

Cyberphobia: Fear of Computers. Computers are everywhere, in the office, in the shops and in the home. They can even hide in toasters and televisions. Computers are evil, they know your thoughts. They know everything.

Mandelmania: This is a fascination with fractals, the Mandelbrot Set in particular. An investigator suffering from Mandelmania stares forever at a computer generated fractal, looking ever deeper into its infinite secrets.

and reason, there is none of the eerie symmetry exhibited by other fractals. As usual, there is no sense of scale.

After a few minutes, small specks appear on the black background, moving sluggishly around the screen in random patterns. As time passes, more of them appear. A successful Spot Hidden roll reveals that the flecks all originate from the main fractal—but none of them return.

Once the program has been running for about five minutes, a silvery sphere grows in front of the fractal. This contains the beacon referred to in the title. As the investigators watch, tiny cracks appear on the sphere. Then a single, fiery red fractal tentacle pushes its way out. Over the space of the next few hours, the beacon hatches and then grows to fill the screen.

- ☐ After 2 hours the beacon-creature has freed three tentacles from the sphere. They wave pathetically around, as if searching for something.
- ☐ After 4 hours the tentacles have retracted and a thick jelly-like glop slowly emerges.
- ☐ After 6 hours there is not much left of the sphere, just a few fragments now being absorbed by the jelly. Seven or eight tentacles now wave feebly.
- ☐ After 8 hours more tentacles have sprouted from the mass, which has shrunk considerably as a result.
- ☐ After 10 hours the beacon is fully grown. There is nothing left of the jelly, it is just a mass of writhing tentacles. It drifts around the screen, apparently searching for a way out. The beacon seethes and pushes hard against the screen, which abruptly ripples and bulges. Fractal tentacles spiral out away from the computer and towards the nearest human. Sanity loss to witness this is 1/1D6.

The Beacon

The beacon floats in mid air, faintly transparent, moving effortlessly towards its intended victim. It ignores material objects, passing through them as if they were not there.

The beacon attacks with 1D6 tentacles. Should one connect, the tentacle passes painlessly into the flesh. Nothing short of killing it shakes the beacon off. It 'reels' itself in, vanishing into its target. It does not reappear.

The target must succeed in a POW vs. POW resistance roll against the creature. If successful, the beacon has failed. If the beacon wins, the investigator falls unconscious for 1D6 minutes.

When the investigator regains consciousness he feels a stabbing pain in his head. This eases when he moves towards the gatherer-fractal in New York, and worsens when he moves away from it. Only on a successful POW x1 roll can the investigator resist moving towards the gatherer. One roll may be made each day. No form of painkiller is effective and the discomfort continues until the investigator reaches the gatherer or the gatherer leaves this plane.

Whether the attempt is successful or not, the beacon does not reappear. There is a 20% chance (equivalent to the beacon's POW x2) that the computer suffered a fatal electrostatic shock as the beacon emerged. If undamaged, the computer does not create another beacon, although other fractals may appear. However, the investigators may run the program again if they so wish.

the index of *Fractal Gods* #12.

File: READ.ME. This is the editorial for *Fractal Gods*, and introduces this issue's features. Here Burnet highlights 'Other Beacons,' an intriguing fractal that changes and develops as time passes. Read.Me also includes subscription data and the deadline for the next issue, three months away.

File: LETTERS. This is the letter column for the magazine. Around each of the letters the editor has added her remarks. Most letters are singing the praises of the computer effects in the latest James Cameron movie, although there is room for constructive comment on previous issues of *Fractal Gods*.

File: FXNOW. A column about upcoming computer effects in the cinema and on television, and what to watch for. Several SF and fantasy films are mentioned, along with other uses of computers: military jets, computer logos, advertisements, and so on.

File: ART. A review of some extraordinary computer sculptures, as seen in London, England. The review's impact is lessened by the fact that the sculptures cannot be seen by the reader.

File: MOLE. These are designer's notes for an adventure game called Mole Adventure. To accompany the notes *Fractal Gods* has included graphics routines to customize the game.

File: MOLE.PIC. Animation for Mole Adventure.

File: PRIDE.COM. A picture of three old men, full title 'Pride of Skibbureen.'

File: GRASS.COM. An abstract picture of dizzying colors, called 'Always Greener on the Other Side.'

File: BEACONS.COM. 'Other Beacons,' the fractal referred to in the editorial.

There are a number of other routines, all requiring various drawing or animation packages. The drawings are often bizarre or humorous, always with strange titles.

Fractal Forms

The gate formed by the Other Beacons program attracts visitors, the inhabitants of the fractal dimension. For every hour that Other Beacons runs, roll 1D100 and consult the following table to see if anything has appeared. The names are entirely descriptive, based on their behavior. These entities are so completely alien that labels are meaningless.

01-25: Nothing.
26-30: 1D3 Floaters.
31-35: 1D6 Floaters.
36-40: 1 Feeder.
41-45: 1D3 Feeders.
46-50: 1 Builder.
51-55: 1 Hider
56-60: 1D3 Hiders.
61-65: 1 Inspector.
66-70: 1 Comber.
71-75: 1D3 Combers.
76-80: 1 Predator.
81-85: 1 Marauder.
86-95: Gate collapses. The background fractal shrinks to nothing leaving only what has already been captured. Nothing else appears.
96-00: Energy overload, the computer chips burn out.

The Beacon, fractal homing signal
INT 5 POW 10 DEX 12 Move 10
Weapons: 1D6 Tentacles 50%, special (see above).
Armor: None, but physical attacks cannot harm it.
Sanity Loss: 1/1D6

The Program

UNLIKE most fractal programs, the investigators cannot 'zoom in' to marvel at Other Beacon's infinite complexity. Instead it opens a gate between the mundane world and the fractal dimension. Through the computer the fractal entities can enter into the investigators' world. Travel is one-way only and the fractals cannot return.

Other Beacons bears little resemblance to most fractal generators. With a successful Computer Use an investigator identifies two separate areas of computing. The first generates the background fractal, then Other Beacons creates the beacon itself.

The actual programming is a mess; Other Beacons is full of pointless loops and repetitive calculation. However, any attempt to tidy the programming results in a program failure. A successful Cthulhu Mythos roll reveals that the calculations appear to be similar to the Create Gate spell in form, if not in substance.

Once the program has created the sphere containing the beacon, the computer stops processing. Everything else that happens is a result of the interaction of the gate with the fractal universe. The gate is actually created on the screen, not within the computer's processors. Switching off the monitor while the fractal slowly proceeds results in a failure: switched back on, the screen remains blank.

If the programmer succeeds with an Idea roll, he realizes that the incomplete programs on Kathi Lathan's PC are in many ways very similar to Other Beacons.

Fractal Creatures

The fractals manifest themselves as pure energy. A faint, sparkling light show, they drift translucently through the air in search of precious energy. For some this is easy; they are able to sip gently—like herbivores—from the electrical currents coursing through civilization. Some, like carnivores, feed upon the energies of others.

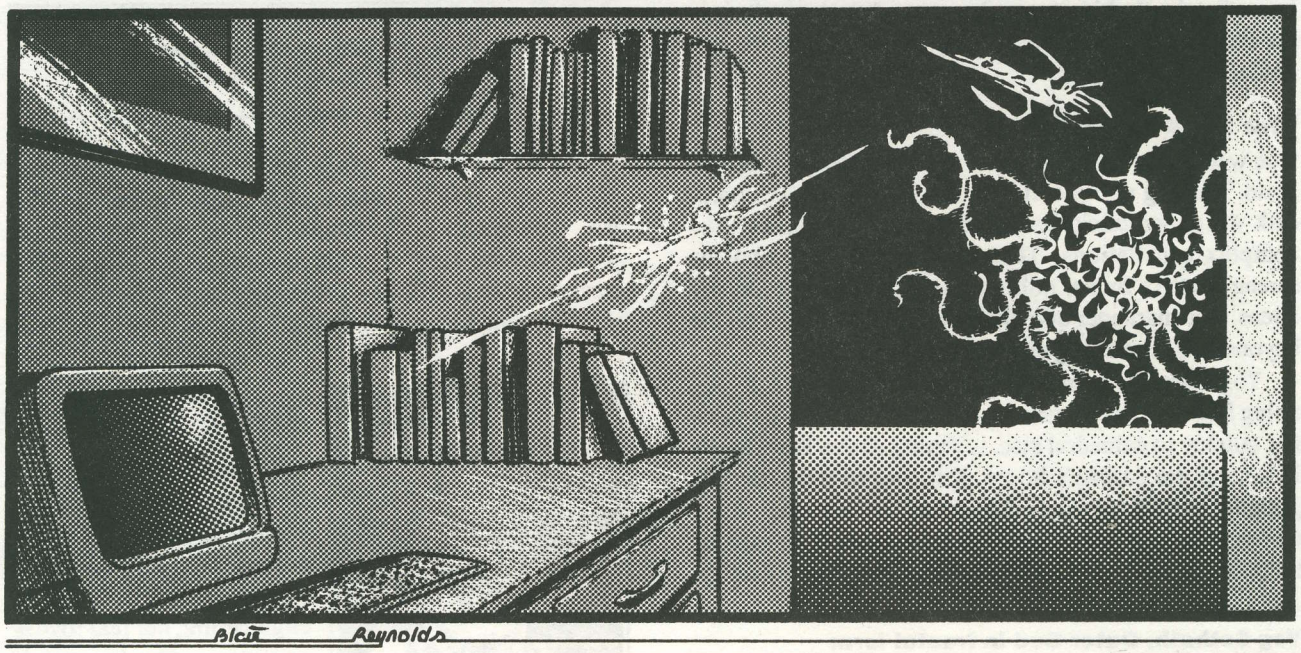
The fractals' only meaningful statistics are its POW and magic points. Once a fractal's magic points equal its POW, it needs to feed no more. However, on this plane the fractals' energies naturally dissipate over a period of 24 hours. Fairly soon they are hungry again. Magic points drained from living things are immediately added to the fractal's own. When this total equals its POW, it ceases to attack. Upon emerging from the computer, a given fractal's magic points are equal to its POW less 1D6+3 (but never less than one).

Although physical weapons cannot harm the fractals, they can be successfully attacked with various forms of energy. Investigators might try low powered lasers, microwaves, or ultrasound. These may or may not work, depending on investigator skill and ingenuity. However, the best weapon is electricity—the most convenient, the electric stun gun. This device delivers 2D6 points of damage to the fractal, subtracted from its current magic point total. When reduced to zero magic points, the fractal dies, winking out of existence.

As a fractal leaves the gate it suffers 1D3 points of damage as it breaks contact with the monitor screen. The fractal jerks swiftly away from the screen and does not approach the monitor while it remains on. A successful Idea roll reveals that this is significant. Investigators can use monitors (or any television screen) to drive and herd the fractals.

Switching off or re-booting the computer closes the gate and kills any fractals still roaming on the screen. Those already floating free are unaffected.

Predators are able to steal magic points from living creatures, instinctively picking on the weakest. They attack by stabbing their victim and overcoming its magic points on the Resistance Table. If successful, the predator steals 1D6 magic points.



Fractal Creatures

Predators can also fire tiny bolts of energy doing 1D3 damage at a cost of 1 magic point each.

INT 3D6+3 POW 2D6+6 DEX 4D6 Move 10

Weapons: Stab 60%, 1D6 magic point drain; Energy Bolts 50%, 1D3.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6

The Marauder

JON Lathan's death was a shock for the marauder. It fled to the neighbors' dog, successfully took control and attacked a stray cat. It then moved on to inhabit Kathi Lathan.

In total control, the marauder (in Kathi's body) appears to mourn the loss of her son as much as anyone. But it frantically spends its nights programming the necessary calculations to open a gate back to its world. The program will be complete in about a week's time, with the marauder working at night. The files' date stamps reveal the marauder's unusual working hours.

Hunting the Marauder

The Marauder hides by day within Kathi Lathan's body. At night, while she writes the computer program it sends sparkling tendrils through the house, feeding from her husband. If there are any sleeping visitors, it feeds from them as well. In the morning all awake, suffering headaches and aching joints, the result of the effects of the magic point drain.

If the marauder is directly attacked with stun guns, it retreats back to Kathi's body. If it thinks she is under threat, it attacks with balls of energy. It also warps Kathi's tongue into a horrific tentacle and her hands into powerful claws. This costs 0/1D6 Sanity points to witness.

If the investigators can drain Kathi Lathan's remaining magic points, the marauder will be forced to leave in search of another source. Using a stun gun on Kathi is not as effective as using it directly on the fractal—the marauder suffers no damage but is forced to leave her body

Marauders

Marauders, stringy masses of fine tendrils, are among the most dangerous of the fractal entities. The marauder always attacks the nearest investigator. The investigator may resist the attack by winning a POW vs POW struggle. If successful, the marauder is forced away. The attacked investigator suffers a 1D3/1D10 Sanity point loss, and the marauder moves to a new target. If the investigator fails, he falls unconscious and loses 1D6/1D20 Sanity points as the marauder tries to take full control of the investigator, but it must succeed an INT x1 roll to do so.

If the marauder cannot immediately take control, its host awakens and is tormented by alien visions of fractal madness. It takes the marauder 1D8 days to achieve control. Meanwhile it steals its host's magic points. This will not be enough to satisfy it and it leaves at intervals to feed on others.

When the marauder takes control it has access to its host's skills and memories. The marauder presently inhabiting Kathi Lathan plans on opening a gate in order to return to its own world. To do this it needs to write a computer program. The marauder occupying Kathi Lathan is sly and cunning. At first, it tries to lure the other investigators into a false sense of security while carrying out its own plans. It will not attack unless they threaten it.

immediately. Kathi is stunned as normal, and any changes the marauder has made remain. If Kathi is killed the marauder must also leave.

The Marauder's Program

One week after the funeral, the marauder finishes its program. Wasting no time, it runs it immediately. The harddisk whirs and clicks as the computer runs through the complex calculations. There is a quick flash and the screen shatters into a million pieces as a gate suddenly opens. The marauder quickly hurls itself through, into the beyond, but something else crawls forth.

Yog-Sothoth, in fractal form, flows through the gate, rising from the wreckage of the ruined computer. Expanding quickly to cathedral size, towering above Hollybrook Road and the Lathan's house. It begins to move slowly, gouging a great furrow in the ground ten feet deep. Fractal tentacles reach out toward nearby houses but then, as the gate collapses, it vanishes with a terrible thunderclap.

Yog-Sothoth, Outer God in fractal form

STR N/A CON 400 SIZ 150 INT 40 POW 100
DEX 1 HP 400 Move 6

Weapons: 1D20 fractal tentacles 80%, grasp and consume.

Armor: None, but physical weapons cannot harm Yog-Sothoth. If reduced to 0 hits, it is dispelled.

Spells: All.

Sanity Loss: 1D10/1D100

Houston

FROM *Fractal Gods #12* the investigators can learn that the author of Other Beacons was Yan Mueller. Unfortunately there was no address given for him. Neither is his address listed in any of the previous issues. Only by getting in touch with the editor of the magazine can they find his address.

Julia Burnet

Julia Burnet

Julia Burnet is a charming civil engineer working for Fisher Consulting Engineers in Houston. Although she has selected a career in engineering, her real love is computers. She has nominated herself as the superuser in the office, maintaining the mainframe and the network computers.

Julia chats happily over the phone to the investiga-

A Menagerie of Fractals

The following are some of the creatures that may appear on the screen. Naturally, this is not a complete list of the denizens of this dimension—a creative keeper can invent others. Statistics are provided for those that leave the gate.

Floaters

Floaters look like short, sturdy clubs, their handles covered in a forest of fins or blades. Barely moving, floaters appear nearly motionless in space.

INT 1D2 POW 1D4 DEX 1 Move 1
Weapons: None.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Feeders

A feeder appears as a conglomeration of spiky spheres and balls. It may be that a single feeder is made up of lots of individual feeders. Feeders drift, ingesting tiny motes of energy floating in space.

INT 1D3 POW 1D4 DEX 1D4 Move 5
Weapons: None.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Builders

Looking rather like a spiky lump, builders construct elegant fractal structures to an unknown design. In the material plane they move to where they can feed from the electrical currents, building their tiny structures from dust particles.

INT 1D6+2 POW 1D6 DEX 2D6
Move 4
Weapons: None.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Hiders

Hiders are tiny blobs bursting with tentacles. They are almost never seen in the open, preferring to hide within other fractals.

INT 1D4 POW 1D4 DEX 2D6 Move 3
Weapons: None.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Inspectors

Inspectors, thin spiky tubes with a blob at one end, are insatiably curious and will examine everything they discover in this new, material world. Inspectors feed by stealing magic points from living animals, and can survive indefinitely in the material world.

INT 2D6+6 POW 3D6 DEX 2D6
Move 7
Weapons: Tentacle 50%, 1D3 magic point drain.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Combers

Combers are thin, filmy patches filled with tiny filaments. Other fractals completely ignore them, even moving through the comber. Once they have passed through, the comber is covered with tiny motes and specks, which slowly vanish.

INT 1D6 POW 1D6 DEX 2D4 Move 7
Weapons: None.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Predators

Thin stalks with a collar of stick-like limbs, predators are fierce fractal hunters. When one appears it savagely attacks feeders, floaters, builders, inspectors, and even the beacon itself.

tors about *Fractal Gods*. She has not let Other Beacons run its full course, and she has not heard of Jon Lathan's suicide. She tries to get the caller to submit something, or even subscribe. Julia has not met Mueller, but gives his address with only a little convincing. She mentions that she has converted his program to run on the mainframe at FCE and is planning to run it in the next couple of days.

If the investigators attempt to dissuade her, she refuses to believe any stories they may offer to back up their claims. However, the program is not yet completed. The investigators may have time to reach Houston before she fires it up.

Fisher Consulting Engineers

Fisher Consulting Engineers rents modern offices on a business park located on the edge of the city. The business park houses other offices and is surrounded by plenty of parking space. Fisher employs almost 100 people at this facility.

Fisher's open-plan offices are plush and modern. Desktop computers are found on every desk, networked to a large mainframe lurking on the ground floor. This mainframe normally runs modelling and analysis packages, but Burnet runs her own programs on it during her free time.

Unless the investigators have given her reason to doubt their sanity, Burnet, after signing them into the logbook, leads them to the mainframe and loads Other Beacons. She needs to do a little editing, but that only takes a couple of minutes. Then she inputs the program and sits back in anticipation.

The mainframe is much faster than a PC. In less than 30 seconds the sphere has appeared and, soon after, the red tentacles push their way out. The beacon grows to the size of the screen in less than two minutes. For those paying attention to such details, and Burnet is one, the resolution is fantastic.

The beacon seethes and writhes, and then pushes against the screen. A bright red fractal tentacle reaches to strike at Burnet. Then the entire creature heaves itself from the screen costing everyone 1/1D6 Sanity points. The beacon attacks relentlessly, aiming for whoever is closest.

If the investigators have not come to Houston, Burnet faces the beacon alone. Regaining consciousness, she finds herself inexplicably pulled towards New York. Helpless to stop herself, as she makes the journey, she phones the investigators, hoping they can help. When Burnet reaches Mueller and the gatherer, she is welcomed. In converting Other Beacons she has already done much of their work for them, and the trio start on the journey to Houston.

New York

MUELLER lives on the fourth floor of a shabby five-story apartment building. The building is poorly maintained—the interior corridors smell—but the doors are uniformly solid. Graffiti is everywhere. On the fourth floor the smell grows worse, rank and acrid.

Knocking on the door prompts a heavy shuffling from within. "Who is it?" growls Mueller, "What do you want?"

Any reference to Other Beacons, *Fractal Gods* or Julia Burnet, and Mueller throws open the door and bids them to enter. He seems friendly enough, although a successful Psychology roll detects madness in his eyes.

Yan Mueller

Yan Mueller was an artist specializing in computer graphics, earning his money creating graphics for computer games. He was also an occasional contributor to *Fractal Gods*. He is now quite insane and dedicated to returning the gatherer to its universe. He hopes to be able to join it there.

Mueller sees himself as having two roles. The first is to help Julia Burnet write her program, and the other is to feed the huge body the gatherer has made. As soon as Mueller realizes that Burnet is not with them, the investigators are designated as food. Only if the investigators suggest they have skills of value does Mueller pause. Finding like-minded programmers, Mueller shows them his work so far and encourages them to contribute. If the investigators fail to show the proper degree of interest, Mueller declares them supper and the fractal attacks.

The gatherer knows when those affected by Other Beacons are approaching and tells Mueller. He lets them go straight to their destiny, food for the fractal.

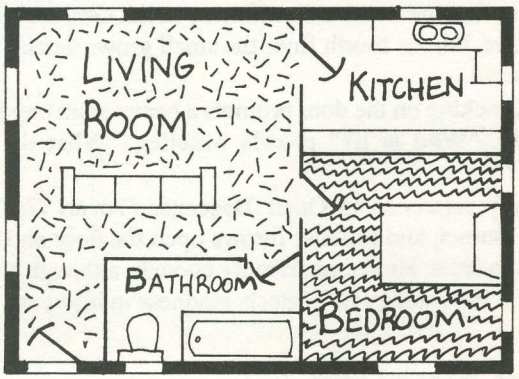
The Apartment

Mueller's apartment is a mess. Rubbish and filth lies everywhere. The curtains are drawn, a sickly light filtering through them. The humid air is almost unbreathable and filled with the sound of hoarse breathing coming from the kitchen.

Pride of place are the two desktop computers, each with the gate program running. Intermittently a fractal creature leaves the screen to wander the room, either to escape or be picked off by the gatherer fractal and eaten.

From the kitchen doorway a tangled mass of hairy tentacles fans out across the room, coiling and uncoiling gently. It costs 1/1D4 Sanity points to see them, more to enter the kitchen and discover their source.

Muller's Apartment



Within the junk, with a successful Spot Hidden roll, the investigators can find the old diary that started everything off. It has now been long forgotten by Mueller.

The Diary

This old diary, written in disjointed German, contains the notes of a scientist born before his time. Using mathematics, the author has attempted to explore a range of dimensions beyond the human norm. The diary adds 4 percentiles to the reader's Cthulhu Mythos skill, and costs 1D6 Sanity points.

The Gatherer Fractal

The gatherer is a creature similar to the marauder and can possess its victims in the same way. Like the marauder, it longs to return to its own plane via a gate.

While it waits for Burnet's arrival, it requires POW to feed. It has grown considerably since arriving and needs the combined magic points of several humans to survive. To help matters, it has taken the neighbors, along with any of the beacon arrivals and sculpted them into a huge, fleshy body. This squats in the kitchen, surrounded by its victims' torn clothes, barely able to move. Its fatty folds and lobes are twisted into a ghastly parody of the fractal's true form. It costs 1D3/1D10 Sanity points to see the bloated heap of living flesh.

As soon as Mueller gives the word, the thing attacks with 1D6 tentacles. Those that hit do 1D6 points of crushing damage before dragging its victims towards the main mass where they will be consumed and absorbed. Investigators succeeding with a STR vs. STR rolls can break free.

The fractal attacks the investigators directly if they appear to be capable of defeating its fleshy body. Organized investigators cause it to flee. However, using the Other Beacons program it is easy to track it wherever it goes.

Gatherer-Thing, fleshy body of the gatherer

STR 25 CON 18 SIZ 26 INT 14

POW 22 DEX 08 HP 22 Move 1

Weapon: Tentacle Thrash 40%, 1D6+2D6; 1D6 Tentacle Grapple 40%, drag to maw and consume.

Armor: 1 point of fleshy skin. If reduced to zero points, the body dies and the gatherer leaves.

Sanity Loss: 1D3/1D10

Note: If the gatherer leaves, this creature can no longer make attacks of any kind.

Going Home

AFTER the investigators' visit, the fractal decides it is time to move on. Police interest also causes it to leave. The first few unfortunate policemen are absorbed into its mass, then Mueller urges it to depart. It leaves its fleshy form and rides in the back of a stolen truck, Mueller at the wheel. Three days later the fractal arrives in Houston, having fed on assorted hitch-hikers and traffic cops along the way. It waits for night before acting. If it has not already met the beacon-infected Burnet on the journey, Mueller pulls up in front of her home and lets the fractal do its stuff.

Then the three of them go straight to Fisher Consulting Engineers. After twenty minutes of fractal-guided editing, the program is ready. The mainframe quickly processes the program, but it still takes twenty minutes before the gate is formed. The gatherer drains Burnet of magic points, causing her to fall unconscious. Then it does the same with Mueller.

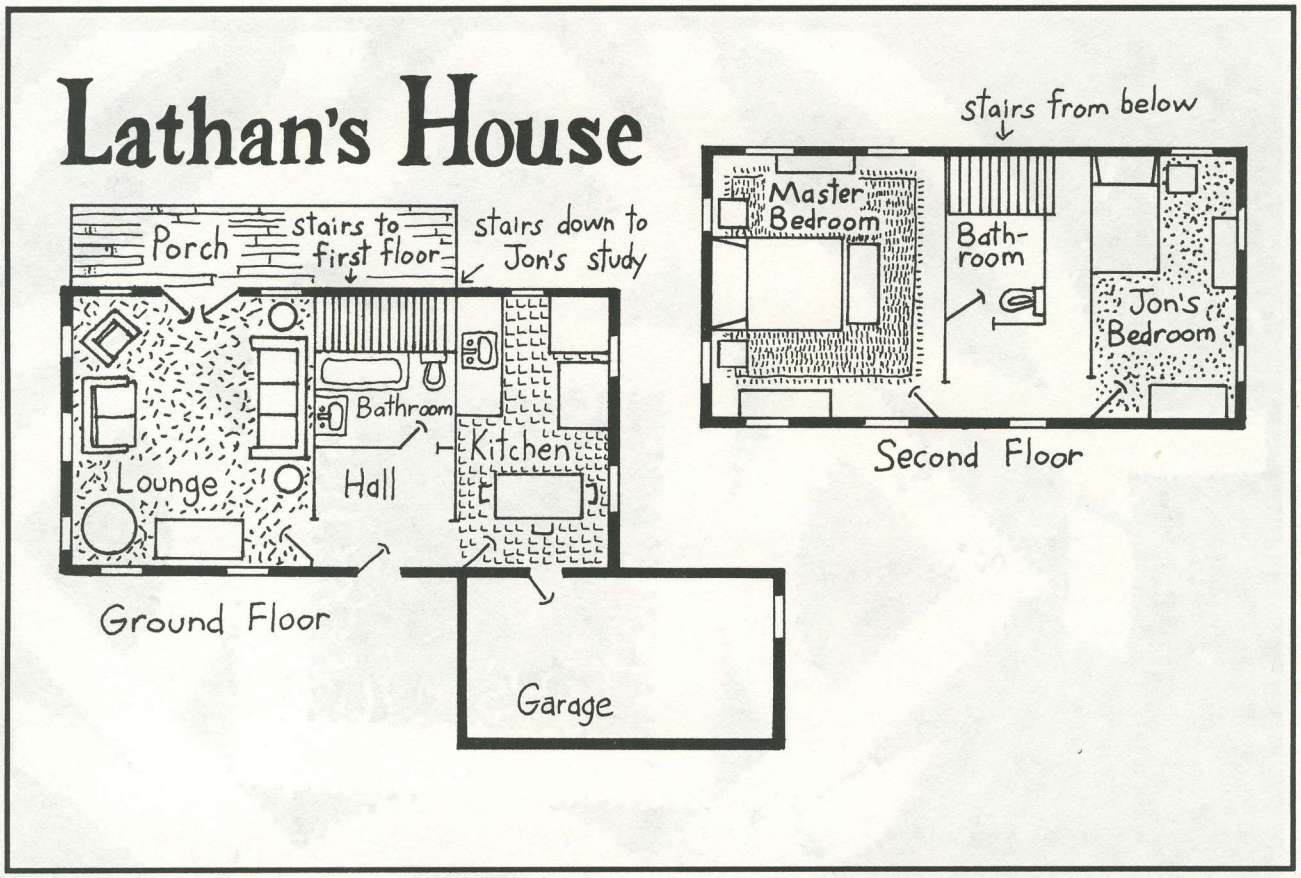
The fractal edges of the gateway yawn wide, beyond the edges of the computer screen. They stretch upwards, through the walls and ceiling of the offices and into a multicolor night (Sanity loss is 1/1D10). Burnet and Mueller are accidentally sucked into the mess as the gatherer fractal vanishes.

A trio of floaters drift out into the night sky, followed by a cautious feeder. Slowly, the gate begins to recede. It will take about five minutes to completely close, leaving Burnet and Mueller trapped on the other side. The investigators can try to rescue them.

Through the Gate

Passing through the gate and into the fractal dimension costs 3 magic points and 1D6 Sanity—each way. For every minute the investigators remain, it costs them an additional magic point and another 1/1D4 Sanity points.

The Fractal Gateway



The fractal universe is a technicolor world of infinite detail and incomprehensible behavior. Huge foamy mountains drift in meaningless circles while revolving fractal entities swarm everywhere, bustling about their alien activities.

In the distance Burnet and Mueller can be seen, being carried away by three fractals that look like balls of hairy string. The fractals bind their captives, but as the investigators approach they turn to deal with these tasty new morsels.

The fractals attack with 1D3 tentacles. If any hit, the fractal drains 1D3 magic points—if it successfully matches its magic points against the victim's on the Resistance Table.

Fractal One
INT 12 POW 14 DEX 13 Move 6
Weapons: 1D3 tentacles 40%, special.
Armor: None, but physical weapons cannot harm it.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Fractal Two
INT 10 POW 18 DEX 11 Move 6
Weapons: 1D3 tentacles 35%, special.
Armor: None, but physical weapons cannot harm it.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Fractal Three
INT 13 POW 11 DEX 16 Move 6
Weapons: 1D3 tentacles 50%, special.
Armor: None, but physical weapons cannot harm it.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Returning back through the gate costs 3 magic points and another 1D6 Sanity points. An investigator may also carry an unconscious burden—Mueller, Burnet or another investigator. Those with fewer then 3 magic points fall unconscious upon passing through the gate. Those who do not leave before the gate closes are lost forever.

As the investigators leave, the gate collapses. The mainframe overloads and starts an electrical fire. It quickly leaps out of control, forcing the investigators to retreat. As the investigators stand and watch the blaze, they become aware of the sound of sirens.

Rewards

The investigators gain 1D6 Sanity points for defeating the marauder. They gain another 1D3 Sanity points for freeing Kathi Lathan, although she needs careful psychiatric care to recover. She may also be left horribly mutilated by the marauder's manipulation of her physiognomy, requiring reconstructive surgery. If Kathi Lathan dies, the investigators lose no Sanity but find themselves at the center of a police investigation.

If Yog-Sothoth devastates the neighborhood, the investigators lose 1D3/1D10 Sanity. They might have prevented it.

Reward the investigators with 1D6 Sanity points for killing the gatherer, another 1D10 points if they kill its fleshy body. Rescuing Mueller and Burnet gains them 1D3 Sanity points for each rescued victim. Mueller is incurable. Burnet recovers slowly, but never touches a computer again.

Without the gatherer, the beacons created by Other Beacons are generally harmless. However, some of the other fractals are not. Investigators that go to elaborate lengths to ensure the programs are never run again (perhaps a virus in *Fractal Gods #13*) should be rewarded with a further 1D10 Sanity points.

Statistics

Anthony Lathan, 36, insurance broker

STR 13	CON 12	SIZ 15	INT 14	POW 12
DEX 08	APP 12	EDU 16	SAN 60	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapon: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3+db.

Skills: Accounting 70%, Bargain 50%, Computer Use 45%, Credit Rating 65%, Debate 50%, Drive Automobile 45%, Fast Talk 60%, Law 40%, Oratory 40%.

Kathi Lathan, 32, fractal-possessed

STR 9	CON 11	SIZ 12	INT 15	POW 9
DEX 15	APP 12	EDU 14	SAN 20	HP 11

Weapons: Claws (x2) 50%, 1D6; Tongue Throttle 55%, 1D4, STR vs. a tongue STR of 15 to free oneself.

Skills: Accounting 40%, Chemistry 40%, Computer Use 60%, Credit Rating 50%, Diagnose Disease 20%, Dodge 50%, Drive Automobile 50%, First Aid 50%, Library Use 50%, Listen 60%, Optics 75%, Sneak 40%.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 to see the fractal warp Kathi's tongue and claws into formidable weapons.

The Mainframe Beacon

INT 5 POW 20 DEX 12 Move 10

Weapons: 1D6 Tentacles 60%, special.

Armor: None, but physical attacks cannot harm it.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6

The Marauder

INT 4D6 POW 4D6 DEX 3D6 Move 9

Weapons: Energy Bolts 60%, 1D3; 1D3 Writhing Tentacles 80%, 1D3 magic point drain.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6

Julia Burnet, 26, editor of *Fractal Gods*

STR 11	CON 14	SIZ 11	INT 16	POW 11
DEX 16	APP 12	EDU 15	SAN 55	HP 12

Weapon: Mace 80%, see Cthulhu Now for effects

Skills: Civil Engineering 50%, Computer Use 70%, Credit Rating 45%, Debate 30%, Dodge 45%, Drive Automobile 40%, Library Use 45%, Photography 30%, Ride 20%, Sneak 45%, Spot Hidden 50%, Swim 40%.

Yan Mueller, 29, insane computer artist

STR 13	CON 14	SIZ 13	INT 14	POW 12
DEX 10	APP 11	EDU 12	SAN 0	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapon: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3+db.

Skills: Archaeology 30%, Astronomy 45%, Computer Art 80%, Computer Use 55%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Drive Automobile 45%, Geology 20%, German 60%, Library Use 40%, Occult 35%, Photography 40%.

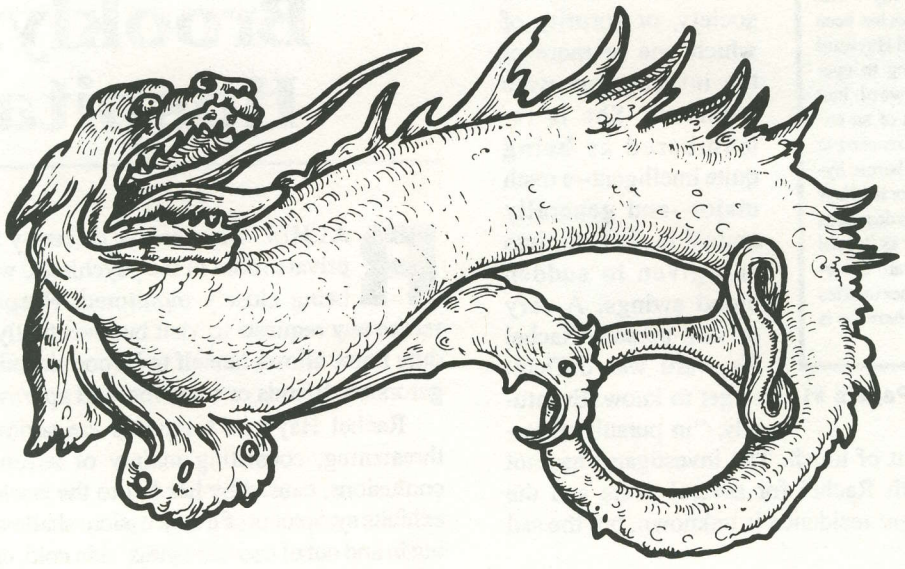
Gatherer, homesick fractal.

INT 14 POW 22 DEX 15 Move 9

Weapons: Spit Energy Bolt 55%, 1D4; 1D6 Writhing Tentacles 80%, 1D3 magic point drain.

Armor: None, but physical weapons cannot harm it.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 ■



The Gates of Delirium

"Man can only see that which he can touch; what he cannot touch he cannot see and what is unseen is unknown. Only when the gates have been rendered asunder is entry to this world granted, and few visitors who see this realm return."

The Book of Eibon

THIS scenario is set in New York City and on nearby Long Island. With only a few minor modifications to events and settings it could easily occur in any large urban area.

Keeper's Information

The scenario begins with the investigators discovering a news article in today's *New York Times* (see Delirium Papers #1).

Subway Accident Victim Identified

Suicide Attempt Foiled

NEW YORK—The young woman pulled from the tracks at Brooklyn's Grand Army Plaza subway station last week has been identified as Ms. Rachel Hayward of Brooklyn. According to eyewitnesses, Ms. Hayward had thrown herself in front of an oncoming train, but was rescued at the last moment by an heroic bystander. A spokesman for the New York Police Department describes the anonymous saviour as "a real Samaritan." Ms. Hayward is currently recovering from her injuries at Brooklyn Hospital, where she is listed in fair condition.

The Delirium Papers #1

The name Rachel Hayward is familiar to at least one of the investigators. The keeper should invent a relationship appropriate to his or her own campaign; perhaps Rachel was once a friend, a schoolmate, or even an old flame; perhaps she once frequented a club, society, or sorority of which one or more of the investigators were members. She is remembered as being quite intelligent--a math major--and generally amicable, but restless and given to sudden mood swings. A very private person, Rachel Hayward was difficult to get to know. Eventually, "in pursuit of herself," she drifted out of touch. The investigator has not been in contact with Rachel for several years and the location of her current residence is unknown, but the sad news of her suicide attempt in the New York Times evokes her memory. The keeper should feel free to add details as necessary, but whatever the rationale, the investigators should have a plausible reason for inquiring into Hayward's suicide attempt.

In addition, the investigators recall seeing something about a subway suicide attempt several days ago. A Luck roll indicates that the paper carrying the article has not yet been thrown out; otherwise it can be easily found in any branch of the New York Public Library, or at the *New York Times* newspaper morgue (see Delirium Papers #2).

Subway Drama!

Woman Saved from Certain Death

Police credit the daring heroics of a perfect stranger with saving the life of an unknown woman late last night after she had thrown herself in front of a subway train at Brooklyn's Grand Army Plaza Station.

A small crowd of commuters waiting for the 11:49 train watched in horror as a young woman jumped onto the tracks. With the train rapidly approaching, a quick-thinking bystander climbed down from the platform and pulled the woman to safety, an instant before the train rushed into the station.

The young woman, who has not been identified, is listed in fair condition at Brooklyn Hospital. The unsung hero was treated for minor cuts and released.

The Delirium Papers #2

All the New York papers carry similar stories.

Brooklyn Hospital

RACHEL Hayward is currently recovering in a private room in the psychiatric ward where she is being closely monitored. Hospital staff at first refuse any requests to visit but eventually a cantankerous duty nurse allows herself to be convinced that the investigators are friends or relatives, and approves the visit.

Rachel Hayward's injuries are serious, but not life-threatening, consisting mainly of severe abrasions and contusions, caused by her fall to the tracks. Hayward also exhibits symptoms of a concussion: shallow breathing, lapsing in and out of consciousness, skin cold, clammy, and pale.

For the duration of this scenario, Rachel Hayward is unable to communicate coherently. Her mental confusion, aggravated by memory loss, prevents her from comprehending anything the investigators say or do; she doesn't even seem to recognize them. If provoked or harassed, she begins to sob hysterically. Soon, an orderly rushes in to administer a sedative.

Rachel Hayward

"Ms. Hayward's had spells like this before," he explains. "Sometimes she wakes up shrieking. Most of the time it's just nonsense, but once in a while you can make out some of what she says. Last night for instance, she was screaming as though someone were in the room with her, trying to kill her. Of course, she was alone; it was very disturbing for the other patients to hear. But then, Ms. Hayward's not the first addict we've had in here."

If asked to elaborate, the orderly suggests that the hallucinations and delusions from which Hayward suffers are the result of prolonged drug use, not of any concussion. "She has a high tolerance to morphine," he adds. "She's probably been using it for years."

Undoubtedly the investigators continue to question this knowledgeable orderly. He tells them that the woman's purse and belongings are kept locked away, but for $20 he could retrieve it for them.

Hayward's handbag contains various cosmetics, an expired driver's license, several credit cards, about $20 in small bills and coins, and a set of keys. The investigators also discover an unfilled prescription for morphine, prescribed by a Doctor R. Gerritsen, Henry Street, Brooklyn. The prescription is dated the day of Hayward's suicide attempt. Hospital staff are not familiar with Dr. Gerritsen; New York has thousands of doctors.

The Attending Physician

Dr. Jerome Wingate, the attending physician, is a busy man and can't be found in his office. Investigators who make a Luck roll while searching for the doctor encounter him in a nearby hallway. He is caught off-guard. and asks if the investigators are "with the media." Reassured that they are friends or relatives of Rachel Hayward, Dr. Wingate says that although his patient's condition is stable, it will be several days before any real improvement can be expected. It will be at least a week before she can be released, psychiatric evaluation notwithstanding. Dr. Wingate reiterates the particulars of her condition, but does not mention her use of narcotics. If the investigators inquire about this he reluctantly tells them Hayward exhibits most of the usual symptoms of long-term drug abuse, adding that he would prefer this information remain confidential—the young woman's reputation has surely suffered enough damage already.

Investigators asking for the name of the fellow who rescued Ms. Hayward meet with no success. That worthy was treated only for minor injuries and released. If any record exists, it cannot be located.

Doctor Gerritsen

Dr. Robert Gerritsen's office on Henry Street in Brooklyn Heights is located in a 19th century two-story Italianate house. Office hours are from 8 AM to 4 PM, Monday through Friday. Investigators who visit without first having made an appointment are turned away by the curt and meticulous receptionist who insists they leave. Gerritsen is not available until tomorrow afternoon. Investigators who linger outside the office are likely to catch the doctor as he leaves for the day, but he is in no mood to be interviewed; he insists that the investigators call during office hours to make an appointment.

Dr. Gerritsen sports heavy sideburns and a middle-aged paunch. He is a very solemn man; seldom does a smile appear on his plump face.

Dr. Robert Gerritsen

When the investigators finally speak with Dr. Gerritsen, they find him evasive. Although he acknowledges that Rachel Hayward is one of his patients and laments her recent suicide attempt, he refuses to divulge additional information. His stock response to inquiries about Hayward—or any other patient—is to cite the confidentiality of the doctor-patient relationship. He also refuses to discuss Hayward's condition, any ailments from which she might suffer, or any medication he might have prescribed. The doctor gets irritable if interrogated, demanding that the investigators leave his office. A Psychology roll suggests that Dr. Gerritsen seems uneasy—perhaps even frightened (he fears that he will somehow be implicated if his connection to Hayward is made known to the authorities).

Dr Gerritsen stays late the day the investigators interview him. After his receptionist leaves, he destroys Hayward's records and leaves about 4:30 PM, unless interrupted. All patient records are kept in a locked filing cabinet in Dr. Gerritsen's office. Those pertaining to Hayward suggest that she first visited Dr. Gerritsen about a year and a half ago, complaining of insomnia and loss of appetite. Dr. Gerritsen, a firm believer in Thomas Sydenham's dictum that no one should be a physician without opium,

prescribed morphine. At each of Ms. Hayward's subsequent visits, she apparently complained of a number of ailments, including fevers, headaches, and anxiety. Each time, Dr. Gerritsen prescribed morphine—and in continually larger doses. A Medicine roll suggests that, medically speaking, morphine is probably not the most appropriate drug to prescribe to a patient with the symptoms of which Hayward had been complaining. A Know roll suggests that the American Medical Association, for one, deems such treatment of addicts irresponsible. If the doctor's records should somehow find their way to proper medical authorities, his license to practice would likely be revoked.

Hayward's last recorded visit was the day of her attempted suicide. Dr. Gerritsen records show he issued another prescription for morphine.

New York Police Department

THE nearest police station to Grand Army Plaza Station is on Butler Street. Officer Peter Kennedy was the first to arrive on the scene; a Luck roll finds him at the station when the investigators arrive. He can offer no information other than what has already appeared in the newspapers. Regarding the identity of Ms. Hayward's rescuer, Kennedy says that the man asked to not be identified. Kennedy feels honor-bound to protect the fellow's anonymity.

The desk sergeant nurtures no such lofty principles. If Officer Kennedy is not present a bribe of $50 obtains the heroic bystander's name: Jason van Brunt. The sergeant also provides the gentleman's Flatbush Avenue address. An additional bribe of $20 encourages the desk sergeant to reveal that Ms. Hayward has no arrest record.

Jason van Brunt

Mr. van Brunt is a middle-aged bank clerk who lives in a Late Georgian style house on Flatbush Avenue. He lives alone with a plump, friendly cat and is seldom found at home during the day.

Van Brunt was waiting for a subway train at Grand Army Plaza station after an evening visit with a friend in Park Slope when he saw a young woman throw herself on the tracks. Without a moment's hesitation van Brunt climbed down to the tracks and pulled the woman—and himself—to safety in the nick of time.

If van Brunt is at home when the investigators call, they find him quite reticent about the subway incident. He is a shy and humble fellow who does not consider himself a hero. Van Brunt does not seek publicity and at first is reluctant to acknowledge his involvement, even to family and friends. If the investigators tell van Brunt that they are friends or relatives of Rachel Hayward, he invites them in.

Jason van Brunt

Van Brunt knows nothing of Rachel Hayward; he had never heard of her before that fateful evening at the subway station. He claims he can provide no additional information and requests that his anonymity be maintained. Psychology rolls suggest, however, that van Brunt is withholding something. A subsequent Persuade roll—or the threat of unwanted publicity—convinces van Brunt to show them the suicide note he found on the platform after rescuing Hayward (see Delirium Papers #3). Van Brunt refrained from furnishing the note to the police because of its extremely outlandish nature; he wanted only to protect the young woman from undue embarrassment.

the suicide note

Dr. Tarrou:

This note shall serve to explain my death, so that no misunderstanding can exist. Do not judge my actions without first understanding the circumstances in which I find myself enmeshed.

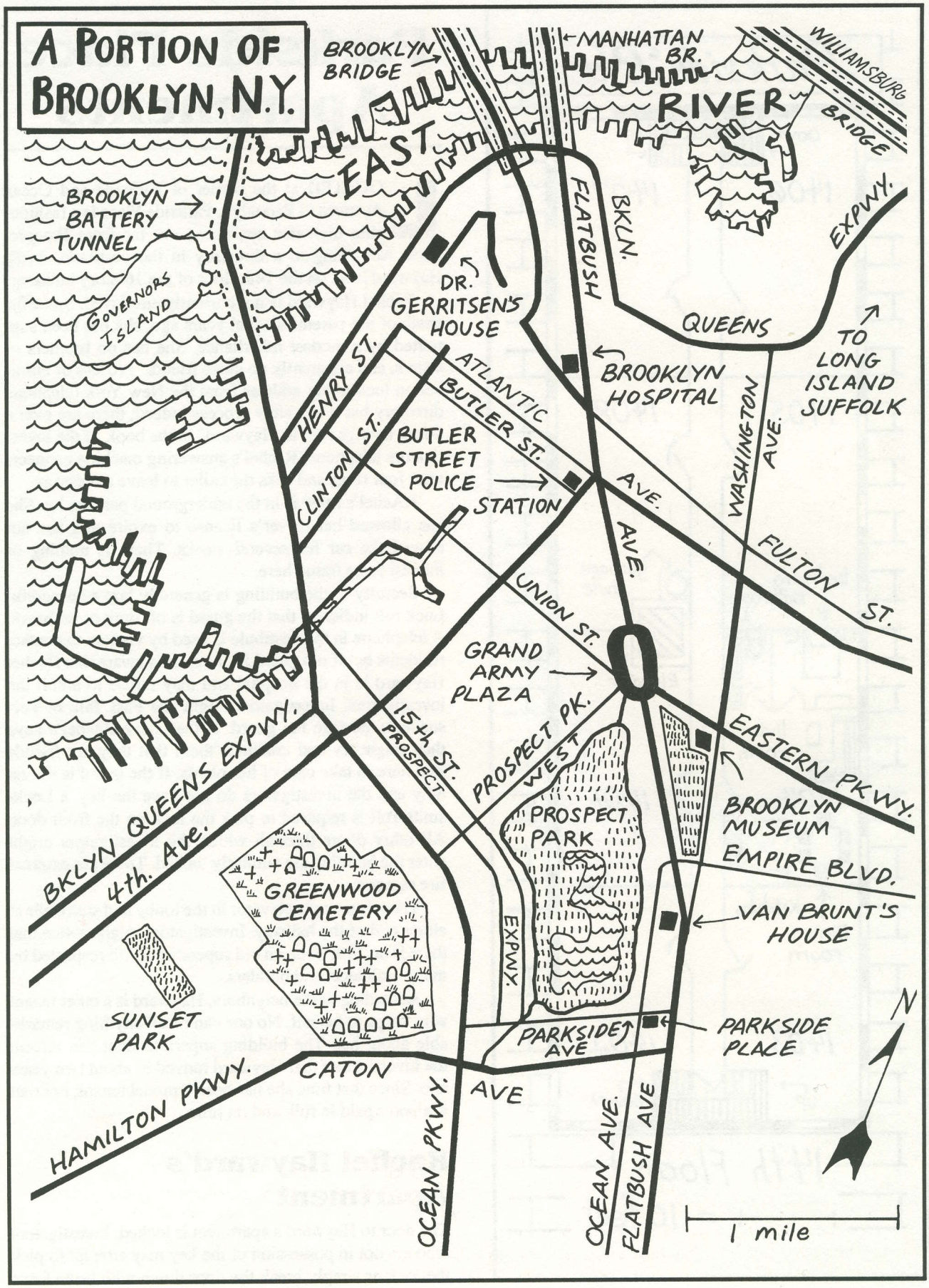
Having grown weary of this mindless, mundane existence, my ennui led me down esoteric paths in my search for an escape. In short, I became obsessed with the need to delve into unknown realms, to penetrate those secret places where no one has yet ventured—the human mind.

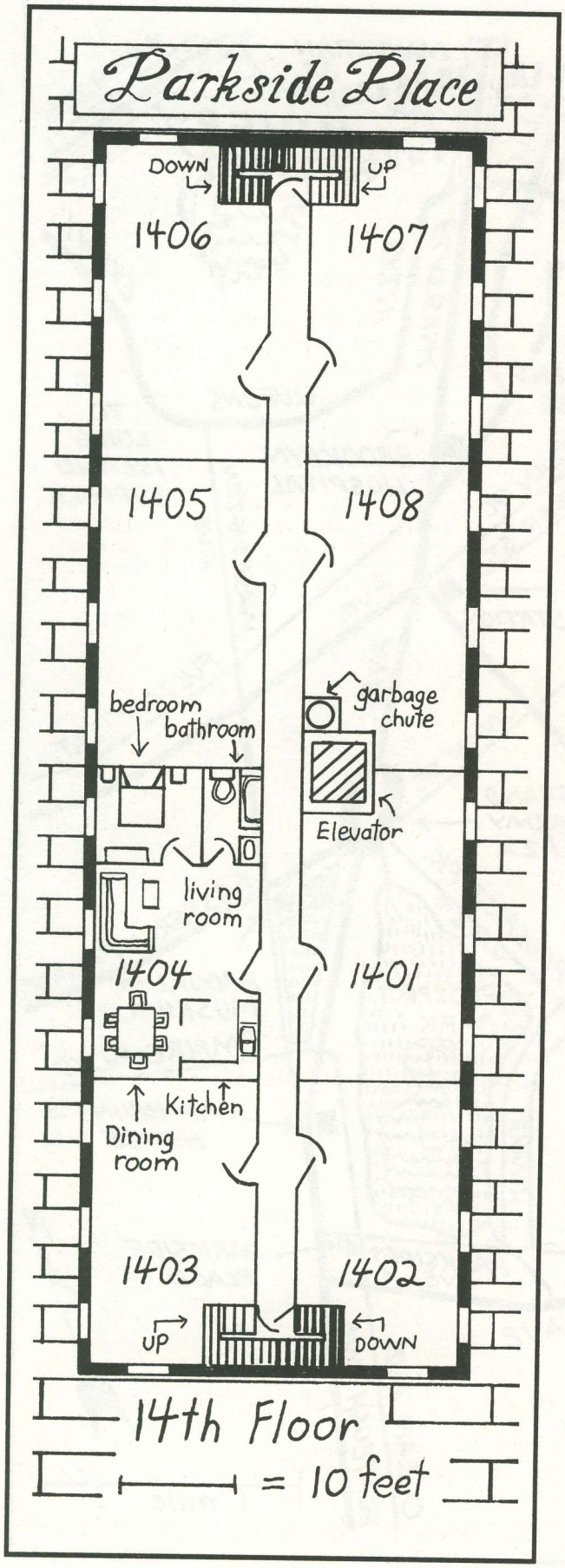
By means of therapeutic opiates and transcendental mathematics, I plunged into unfathomed depths, exploring foreign, but all-too-familiar terrain. I sought a place where I could be at peace, and new feelings could develop and flourish. but instead I was swept away by undercurrents of anonymous sensation as torrential as the tides, and I discovered—and unleashed within my own mind—a primal force that cannot be tamed.

I have passed through the gates of delirium, to become both pawn and prey of ultra-worldly powers: insatiate, half-seen and tenebrous monsters—the very essence of terrifying, macabre dread: the inescapable madness and horror of cosmic evil that renders human existence both tenuous and trite.

Burdened by these unspeakable revelations, there can be but one escape. I must seek oblivion.

Rachel Hayward


A PORTION OF BROOKLYN, N.Y.
BROOKLYN BRIDGE
MANHATTAN BR.
WILLIAMSBURG BRIDGE
RIVER
EAST
BROOKLYN BATTERY TUNNEL
GOVERNORS ISLAND
DR. GERRITSEN'S HOUSE
FLATBUSH
BKLN.
EXPWY.
QUEENS
TO LONG ISLAND SUFFOLK
BROOKLYN HOSPITAL
HENRY ST.
ATLANTIC
BUTLER ST.
CLINTON ST.
BUTLER STREET POLICE STATION
WASHINGTON AVE.
AVE.
FULTON ST.
UNION ST.
GRAND ARMY PLAZA
15th ST.
PROSPECT
PROSPECT PK. WEST
EASTERN PKWY.
BROOKLYN MUSEUM
EMPIRE BLVD.
PROSPECT PARK
BKLYN QUEENS EXPWY.
4th. Ave.
GREENWOOD CEMETERY
EXPWY.
VAN BRUNT'S HOUSE
SUNSET PARK
PARKSIDE AVE
PARKSIDE PLACE
HAMILTON PKWY.
CATON AVE
OCEAN PKWY.
OCEAN AVE.
FLATBUSH AVE
N
1 mile



Parkside Place Apartments

LOCATED at the corner of Parkside and Ocean Avenues in Brooklyn, Parkside Place is a fashionable high-rise apartment not far from Prospect Park. According to a directory in the vestibule, an R. Hayward lives on the 14th floor of the 16-story building.

Rachel Hayward is not currently employed. Since the death of her parents several years ago, she has been supported by a modest inheritance. She has no brothers or sisters, and apparently no close friends. Process of elimination locates her address from the New York telephone directory but it is a slow process indeed; there are over a dozen listings for "R. Hayward" in the book. If the investigators telephone, Rachel's answering machine connects after four rings and asks the caller to leave a message.

RAchel's BMW is in the underground parking lot. She has allowed her driver's license to expire and has not moved the car for several weeks. There is nothing of interest to be found here.

Security in the building is generally lax; a successful Luck roll indicates that the guard is off duty or on break. A telephone in the vestibule is used by visitors to contact residents but if the guard is there, he is aware that Rachel Hayward is in the hospital and may refuse to admit the investigators. Investigators might use Fast Talk or Persuade to assuage the guard. If they have Rachel's keys they might try and convince them that they are friends sent here to take care of her plants. If the guard is not on duty and the investigators do not have the key, a Locksmith roll is required to pick the lock on the front door. All other doors through which the investigators might enter the building are similarly locked. There are external fire escapes.

There is a single elevator in the lobby and stairwells at either end of the hallway. Investigators might notice that there is no 13th floor, an old superstition still respected by many architects and builders.

According to the neighbors, Hayward is a quiet tenant who keeps to herself. No one can recall anything remarkable about her. The building superintendent can inform the investigators that Hayward moved in about two years ago. Since that time she has been a model tenant; her rent is always paid in full, and on time.

Rachel Hayward's Apartment

The door to Hayward's apartment is locked. Investigators who are not in possession of the key may attempt to pick the lock or simply break the door down with brute force

(door STR 15). Forcing the door at any time of the day or night brings 1D4+1 curious residents out into the hallway almost immediately.

Inside, Hayward's apartment appears to have been ransacked. Furniture is overturned, ornaments and knick-knacks scattered across the floor mingled with appliances and utensils from the kitchen. The contents of every closet and cabinet, of every wardrobe and cupboard, lie strewn about the place. Although the investigators might well presume that the apartment has been burglarized, this mess was caused by Hayward herself during a fit of violent despair immediately preceding her thwarted suicide attempt.

Rummaging through the debris takes time, a thorough search requiring four man-hours. For each hour each investigator spends sifting through the jumble, a Spot Hidden roll allows a chance of turning up a small metal box containing a bottle with seven blue capsules. The ornate box is unlabelled, the capsules unidentifiable, even with a successful Pharmacy or Medicine roll. Although the investigators have no way of knowing, the pills contain the drug Liao, obtained by Hayward from the unorthodox psychiatrist Raymond Tarrou. Should the investigators have the tablets examined by a competent pharmacist the results are inconclusive; certain constituent compounds defy analysis.

Clues in Hayward's Apartment

A red light blinks on the answering machine, indicating it has messages. Playing back the tape, the investigators discover a call made by a man who speaks with a French accent (see Delirium Papers #4).

An IBM computer sits on a sturdy table in Ms. Hayward's bedroom. Miscellaneous floppy diskettes scattered about the room are found to contain unremarkable software—games, utilities, and other, miscellaneous programs. One disk, however, has been folded in half and thrown aside, found lying under the bed. It is permanently creased and contains but a single file called "DREAMS.TXT." Despite the damage sustained from the crease, the file can still be accessed by anyone with compatible equipment and who is able to make a Computer Use roll. Some portions of the text file have been obliterated but, with careful scrutiny, most remain legible (see Delirium Papers #5).

a phone message from Dr. Tarrou

"Hello Ms. Hayward, this is Dr. Tarrou. I trust the capsules of the drug Liao have been effective in alleviating your distress. Let me remind you that this wonderful new therapeutic medicament is still in its experimental stage and has not yet been approved for pharmaceutical purposes. Remember to take only one capsule each night before retiring, and please record upon waking every sensation in as much detail as recollection allows; it will allow me to more clearly monitor your progress at our subsequent consultations here in Asharoken. I trust that you are finding this new drug much more efficacious than the morphine."

The telephone is equipped with a last number redial feature. If the investigators use this to discover where she last called, they are connected to Dr. Tarrou's house on Long Island near Asharoken. Investigators who listened to the message on the answering machine recognize the doctor's voice.

The Delirium Papers #4

entries in Rachel Hayward's dream-journal, computer file

Last night I took Dr. Tarrou's experimental capsule for the first time. I felt very, very light, like a feather floating on a gentle breeze. I floated up, weightless, looked down at my room and saw myself asleep in bed. What a strange, soothing experience!

Last night, with the aid of the marvelous drug, I floated further and further away, as though I swam in the ether. The walls vanished, and all familiar objects disappeared as time and space seemed to merge into one, a strange new dimension in which I could perceive everything simultaneously and from all sides.

Tonight I drifted back—not of my own volition, but inexorably drawn there by some unseen force. I traveled through strange curves and angles of non-Euclidean space.

I retired early last night, eager to ingest Dr. Tarrou's wonderful capsule. I am beginning to realize that time and space are not separate, but identical. They are both nothing more than imperfect manifestations of an invisible reality which I am gradually becoming able to perceive. I sense that it will not be long before the veils are lifted and all will be made clear to me. At last I have found a sense of purpose!

I could not wait for nightfall to continue my journey. This morning, in my exuberance, I took a handful of capsules. I glimpsed terrible things which mankind was never meant to distinguish but, mercifully, I can think of no words with which to describe them. They are all around us at all times, hungry and hateful, but they cannot leave their dimension to enter ours unless guided by one who twice crosses the artificial boundary of time and space—exactly what I have done by returning to our earthly dimension. How can I face another day knowing what horrors I have ushered into this world?

The Delirium Papers #5

Disturbing Events

When Rachel returned from her drug-induced cerebral wanderings she brought back with her a fragment of the fourth dimension which now co-exists with the reality generally perceived by mankind. The unearthly curves and outrageous angles of the fourth dimension appear

Any unfortunate investigator who falls through the doorway is later found on the floor of Ms. Hayward's apartment, his or her body smashed and mangled as though it had fallen from a great height. Sanity loss is 1/1D4 points.

The elevator does not move, its doors remaining open, until the investigators have closed the door to apartment 1304. It then functions normally.

The Body in the Elevator

When the investigators leave Ms. Hayward's apartment the elevator doors open to reveal a skeletal corpse clad in tattered rags lying crumpled on the floor. A nauseating stench fills the air and what little flesh remains on the corpse begins to rot away right before the investigators' eyes. All witnesses lose 1/1D3 Sanity points.

Before the investigators can react the doors close and the elevator is gone. When summoned again, the elevator is empty, though a noisome odor remains.

The Horror in the Garbage Chute

If the investigators decide to clean up the apartment they face a daunting task. Several trips to the garbage chute will be necessary. It is found in a small room no bigger than a closet, across the hall next to the elevator. On one such trip, the hapless investigator opens the chute to find a mass of writhing tentacles flailing out at him.

A Dodge roll succeeds in backing away in time to avoid this initial attack but before the investigator can attack the tentacles thrash out again.

Tentacled Horror

STR 26	CON 26	SIZ NA	INT 9	POW 18
DEX 8	HP 26	Move NA		

Weapons: Tentacle (x3 attacks/round) 30%, 1D6 plus grab
Sanity Loss: 1/1D6

Although the creature has six tentacles, it can only attack with three at once, due to the confined space of the garbage chute. If a target is hit by a tentacle, the victim is dragged toward the creature's gullet at the bottom of the chute. Once a victim is grabbed, he or she must pit his or her SIZ against the creature's STR of 26 on the resistance table. Those who fail are pulled into the garbage chute and devoured. The confines of the room preclude any subsequent Dodge rolls by the victim.

If the creature is destroyed it immediately returns to its own dimension, leaving no trace whatsoever of its occupation of the garbage chute. Although the chute itself is a relatively small opening, the tentacled horror is able to crush its victim sufficiently to drag it in, regardless of its size. The remains of investigators victimized by this hideous creature are found the next day when the large garbage dumpster in the basement is emptied. The remains are barely recognizable, the hapless victims have seemingly been crushed and mangled by a trash compactor. Witnesses lose 1/1D4 points of Sanity.

Doctor Tarrou

DR. TARROU'S home is currently located on Eatons Neck Point in Long Island's Suffolk County, a hour's drive east of Brooklyn. The nearby village of Asharoken is a small, unremarkable resort community whose residents know little or nothing of the doctor.

Dr. Tarrou's two-story house is an unadorned, rectangular, early Georgian building overlooking Long Island Sound. A gable roof and large chimneys enhance the symmetry. The ornately carved entrance with its pilasters, paneled double doors, and semi-circular fanlight, forms a gracious entryway to the home. An inscribed brass plate beside the door bears the legend "Dr. R. Tarrou. Psychiatrist." Beneath this plate is a doorbell.

Dr. Tarrou is recognized by the American Medical Association but his qualifications are dubious. Local residents say that he moved into the old Ephraim Walker place and set up his practice about a year ago. No one knows for sure who his patients are, but locals suspect them to be wealthy and jaded New Yorkers.

If the investigators call during the day, the doctor answers the door himself. Investigators who heard the message from Dr. Tarrou on Hayward's answering machine, or inadvertently called him with the last number redial feature, recognize his French accent. Although Dr. Tarrou is aware of Rachel Hayward's suicide attempt he is not interested in speaking to anyone who inquires about her. Tarrou even refuses to acknowledge that she is one of his patients.

An investigator requesting treatment for a feigned disorder might attempt to infiltrate the doctor's practice, but he or she will be informed that Dr. Tarrou is presently not accepting any new patients. He recommends a number of different psychologists in New York City.

If the investigators observe Dr. Tarrou's house from a safe distance during the latter part of the day, they observe a small van drive up. Depending on how far away the investigators are, and whether or not they have binoculars, they might notice the Asian driver (an Anthropology or EDU x1 roll identifies him as Vietnamese) get out and open the back door of the van. Two men emerge and follow the driver into the house.

If the investigators call in the evening they appear to get no response until, after a time, Dr. Tarrou's servant, Ngo Dinh Hao, answers. He informs the callers that the doctor is indisposed until tomorrow.

Doctor Tarrou

Dr. Tarrou was a military doctor in French Indochina. Dishonorably discharged for what the French army termed "indiscretions contravening the ethics of his profession," Dr. Tarrou set up a private practice in the port and railhead of Haiphong, and remained there after the

war had ended. When some of his more unorthodox procedures became public, Dr. Tarrou was forced to flee Vietnam. He arrived in New York City over a year ago, accompanied by his assistant and a healthy supply of his experimental drug Liao. He soon purchased a secluded house on Long Island and resumed his practice.

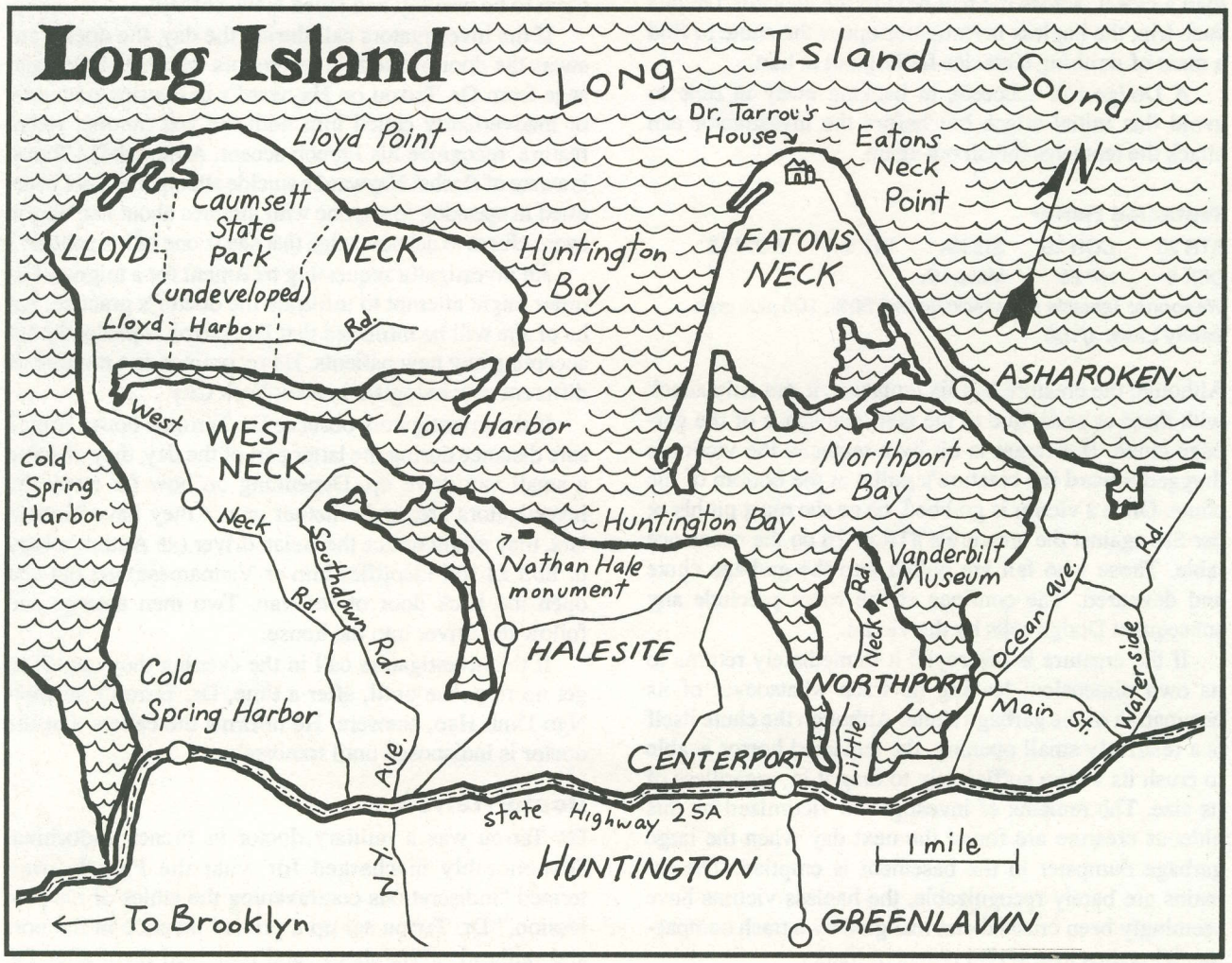
Dr. Tarrou

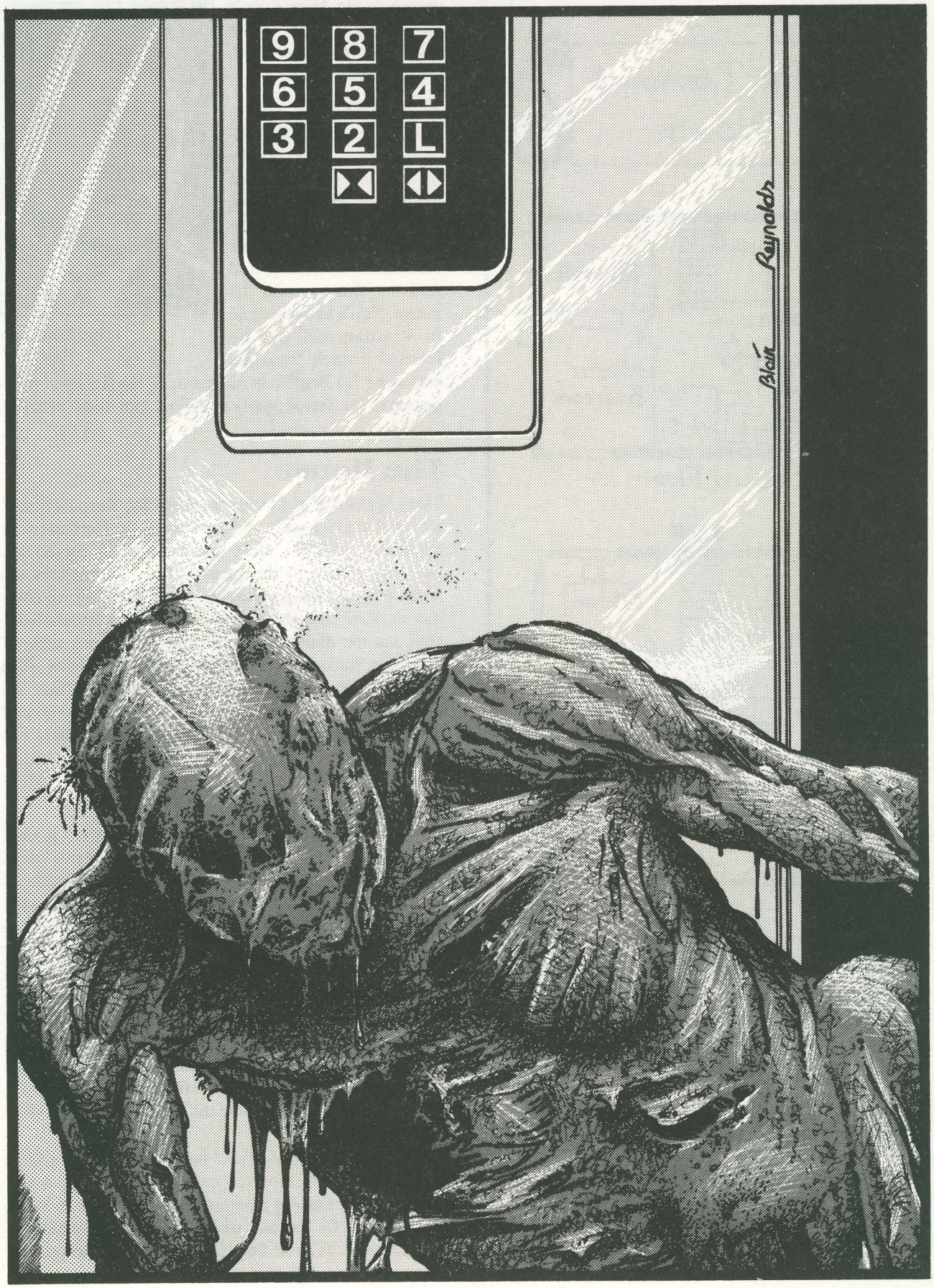
Dr. Tarrou is a haggard and hollow-eyed fellow in his mid-sixties. His skin is pallid, nearly as white as his lab coat. The doctor is usually unshaven and his fingernails are unusually long. Dark circles beneath his cold grey eyes suggest either a lack of sleep or possibly a nutritional deficiency.

French is Dr. Tarrou's native tongue, although he is also fluent in English and Vietnamese. Dr. Tarrou is not a cultist nor does he serve any Mythos entity. But he *is* a dangerously deranged specialist whose unusual psychological techniques threaten his patients' sanity and lives. Those who engage Dr. Tarrou's therapeutic services become his guinea pigs, test-subjects for his experimental methods.

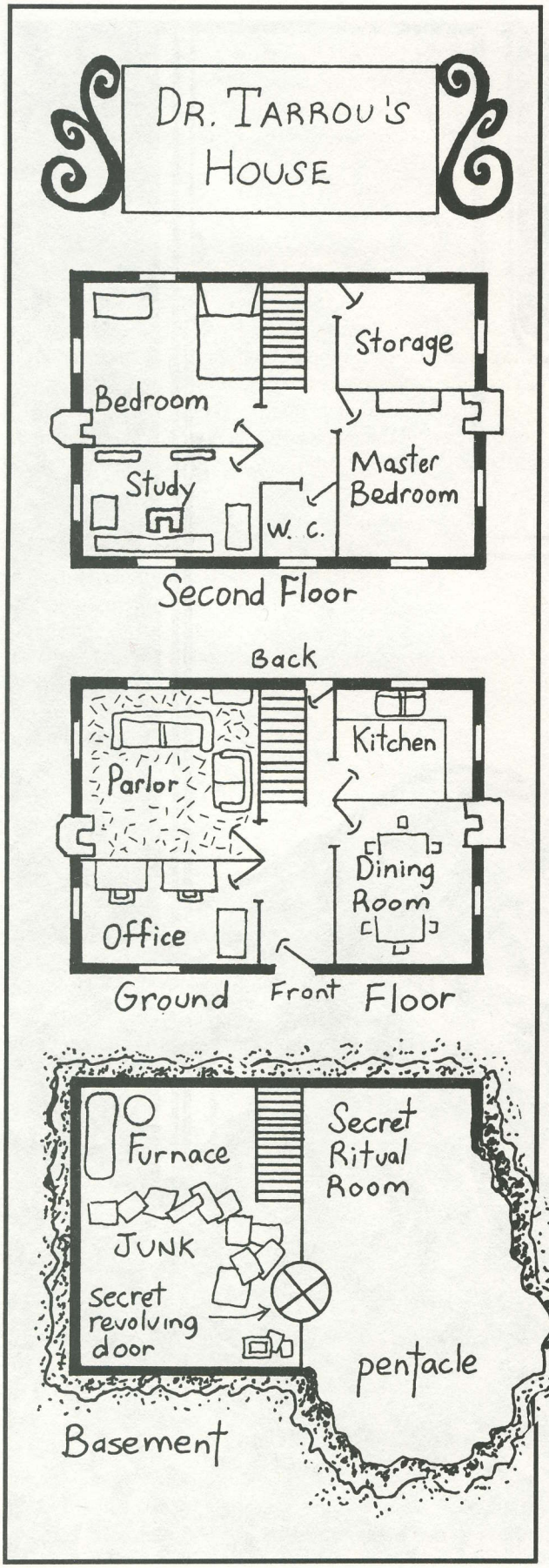
The doctor firmly believes that every human being is mentally linked with all the life that has ever existed in the universe. These links cannot be easily perceived because the illusion of time and space prevents mankind from entering the other dimensions that contain them. With the aid of the ancient drug Liao Dr. Tarrou hopes to penetrate this barrier, and prove his theory. However, he is not inclined to seek the evidence firsthand—he instead offers the drug to his most desperate patients, and then monitors their progress. Ms. Hayward, unfortunately, grew psychologically dependent on the drug and took too great a dose, catapulting her into direct contact with the alien horrors of the outer dimensions. Not surprisingly, the unfortunate subjects of his experiments are frequently driven insane.

Dr. Tarrou obtained a license to practice from the American Psychiatric Association by bribing a clerk; in-





The Body in the Elevator



quiries to the Association's Washington D.C. office confirm that he is a legitimate doctor.

Ngo Dinh Hao

Ngo Dinh Hao

This is Dr. Tarrou's Vietnamese henchman, always on hand and ready to assist the doctor. Burly, sweaty, and hot-tempered, Ngo Dinh Hao was Dr. Tarrou's servant in Haiphong and fled the country with the doctor. Ngo's native tongue is Vietnamese, but he learned French from his employer; his English is rudimentary. He is a loyal companion to Dr. Tarrou, ready to defend him to the death.

The House

There is nothing at all unusual about Dr. Tarrou's house. He purchased it legally and pays his taxes. The front door opens onto a bright, clean entrance hall. A carved oak staircase climbs to the second floor. Throughout the house there are hung a number of fine paintings, an obvious show of taste and money. The kitchen is unremarkable, but the dining room contains a long oak table of great age, surrounded by velvet-upholstered chairs. Fine china is displayed in a hutch against the wall. There are several comfortable chairs in the parlor, gathered around the cozy fireplace. An upright piano stands against one wall.

Dr. Tarrou's Office

This also serves as the doctor's consultation room. Several standard medical encyclopedias and reference works on psychology are located in an unlocked barrister's bookcase, along with a number of curious volumes on the nature of the sensory world and reality, and altered states of consciousness.

Dr. Tarrou keeps his supply of Liao drug locked inside a sturdy metal cabinet along with other, less remarkable pharmaceuticals. There are several dozen capsules of Liao here, all in ornate metal boxes. The cabinet has a STR of 15, but may be picked by an investigator with the appropriate tools and a successful Locksmith roll. Dr. Tarrou carries the only key to the cabinet on his person at all times.

Dr. Tarrou's second floor bedroom contains a large four-poster bed, screened by curtains, and a desk. A manila file folder sits atop a nightstand beside the bed. Inside are certain of Dr. Tarrou's patient's records, all handwritten in French. A Read French roll is required to read the short notes (see Delirium Papers #6). Addresses for each

Dr. Tarrou's notes

Fielding, Martin: *Currently in initial stages of therapy. Signs of paranoia enhanced by treatment. Reports out-of-body experience and floating sensations. Maintain dosage.*

Hayward, Rachel: *Therapy in progress. Exhibits signs of psychological dependence. Reports vivid images after numerous out-of-body experiences overlapping into reality(?). Maintain dosage.*

McNab, Bruce: *Therapy In progress. Frequency of manic-depressive episodes increase with treatment. Reports vague. Disconnected images and out-of-body experiences provide nothing concrete. Increase dosage.*

Spencer, Amy: *Advanced stages of treatment. Grip on reality most certainly slipping. Ability to function in this world impaired, but reports extremely lucid encounters during treatment. Patient approaching threshold—will sanity hold? Increase dosage.*

The Delirium Papers #6

of the patients accompany the file, including that of Rachel Hayward.

The desk contains unremarkable papers. Inside one of the unlocked drawers, however, is an old book, Volume III of the printed version of *The Revelations of Glaaki*. It is in English, adds 2 percentiles to Cthulhu Mythos knowledge and causes a Sanity loss of 1D4 points. It contains a single spell, Call Daoloth, and has a spell multiplier of x3. Although reading the entire book would take several weeks, a successful Read English roll, followed by a Spot Hidden, discovers a relevant passage (see Delirium Papers #7). Dr. Tarrou plans to use the knowledge contained within this book to invoke Daoloth. He has committed the spell of invocation to memory and does not require the book to accomplish this. Investigators must read the entire book before attempting to learn the spell contained within—being unable to do so before the conclusion of this scenario, unfortunately, denies them the option of using the reverse of the spell, Dismiss Daoloth.

excerpt from *The Revelations of Glaaki*

"And thou enprise to retray the veils:

Against He Who Lifts the Veils, it behooves thee to purvey certain devices, in order to warn mishap when His umbre doth cause all to wan. Dress well the paynim perclose, and the Pentacle of Planes such as that made by the second sign of the Saaamaaa Ritual, doth suffice, tofore.

He is hight, else the petitioner himself is benome. Take force that said perclose remains unrased. Tofore He is cleped, rap well the paynim engine upon the flagstone. If thou wish to beskift, rap well again till dispel the world which He Who Lifts the Veils domineth.

Seek not to entreat with Him, lest He doth rash thee In like manner, it is not unwise to avert thine eyes, for He is beseen but by folly."

The Delirium Papers #7

The Study

The study is locked, and contains a large wooden writing desk with several drawers (all locked). One of the drawers holds Dr. Tarrou's ledgers; an Accounting roll and an hour of study determine that everything is in order. The study is strewn with esoteric mathematical charts and formulae, and fantastic geometric symbols of every description. There are triangles, double triangles, tetragrams and pentagrams, all traced on parchment or engraved on metal and glass. No Occult roll is necessary to realize that these have some significance.

A bookshelf in the corner contains a multitude of books on mathematics including studies of the theorems of Pythagoras and Aristotle, Euclid and Archimedes. Mingled with these are treatises by Ptolemy and Al-Khowarizmi. European mathematicians are represented by Pascal, Descartes, and Newton. More esoteric volumes, such as Cotton Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible World* and Sir W. Barrett's *The Threshold of the Unseen* are jumbled together with Agrippa's *De Occulta Philosopha* and pamphlets on medieval sorcery.

Many of the books in Dr. Tarrou's collection are long overdue from the New York Public Library and several appear to have been stolen from the reading room. It is apparent that Dr Tarrou is obsessed with the arcane principles of mathematics. But to what end?

The basement contains cords of wood and a jumble of old furniture including a broken rocking chair, a table, and an old mattress—items left behind by the heirs of the previous owner. A furnace has been installed, but Dr. Tarrou seems to favor the fireplaces, except in the depths of winter.

Research

INVESTIGATORS may want to do some checking up on the doctor, or on his patients. What follows is the evidence which can possibly be uncovered.

The Other Patients

Using the addresses found in the doctor's house the investigators, with a little sleuthing and successful Luck rolls, can make appointments to speak with Dr. Tarrou's other patients.

Amy Spencer

Once a successful and beautiful model, the pressures of the lifestyle became unbearable for Amy Spencer. She went to see Dr. Tarrou and was the first to receive the Liao therapy. She now resides in the psychiatric ward of Bellevue Hospital, her sanity permanently shattered as a result of the experimental drug.

Hospital staff are unaware of Dr. Tarrou's involvement—Ms. Spencer was found wandering the streets of Manhattan, completely mindless. She can give the investigators but little information, and only if they have made a successful Psychoanalysis roll.

Martin Fielding

Martin Fielding is an advertising executive. Following the recent break-up of his twenty-year marriage, Fielding was on the verge of a breakdown when he went to see Dr. Tarrou. Fielding has complete faith in Tarrou, and firmly believes that the doctor is helping him to get better. Little the investigators can do or say will change his mind.

Bruce McNab

Bruce McNab is a restaurant owner. He originally came to Dr Tarrou in search of a cure for what he believes to be Alzheimer's disease. McNab started receiving the Liao therapy about the same time as Ms. Hayward. The drug has not had the same effect on McNab as it has had on her. McNab believes that he should be receiving a larger dose.

New York Public Library

The Central Research Branch of the New York Public Library is located in Manhattan, on the west side of Fifth Avenue between 40th and 42nd streets. It is one of the world's leading research libraries with millions of volumes of printed material. The building itself is extravagant, finished in marble and lavishly decorated inside and out. The library is open Monday through Wednesday 10 AM to 9 PM, Thursday through Saturday 10 AM to 6 PM, and closed on Sundays and holidays.

Patron information is strictly confidential but a successful Persuade or Fast Talk roll reveals that Dr. Tarrou's card is currently suspended. Apparently he has a number of long overdue books. The clerk at the information desk hastens to add that this would not necessarily preclude the doctor's use of the Main Reading Room or special collections.

Investigators who search for books on advanced mathematics find the shelves with unaccountable gaps. Many of the titles found in Dr. Tarrou's library are marked as missing in the card catalogue.

Investigators who wish to research the drug Liao find no reference to it except in the Main Reading Room collection. Here, for every hour spent searching, each investigator may attempt a Library Use roll to discover the single brief reference contained in an obscure medical encyclopedia. While virtually unknown to western medicine, Liao was supposedly used centuries ago by Chinese alchemists. It is reputed to have amazing occult powers. Someone has circled this information with a highlighting marker

The Parting of the Veils

BEHIND the old mattress in the basement of Dr. Tarrou's house there is a small door in the wall which measures about four feet high and three feet wide. Beyond, there is a large, very dark room. It has been crudely expanded to its present size with pick and shovel.

It is here that Dr. Tarrou intends to invoke Daoloth, Render of the Veils. The ritual takes place at midnight, and involves Dr. Tarrou, his Vietnamese henchman, and the two men who arrived in the van earlier that day—Dr. Tarrou's patients, Martin Fielding and Bruce McNab. Each of these individuals contributes a magic point to the spell. In the case of Fielding and McNab, they have been duped into believing that this is some form of experimental therapy. If the investigators interrupt the spell by knocking at the front door, Dr. Tarrou sends Ngo Dinh Hao to investigate. Assume that the spell succeeds in invoking Daoloth.

A pentacle similar to one of the prototypes found in Dr. Tarrou's study has been inscribed upon the floor. Two candles—the only illumination in the room—flicker within the pentacle. The participants stand around the pentacle, a few feet back, while Dr. Tarrou slams a metal rod against the floor several times and calls out: "Uthgos Yuggoth, Uthgos qond, Daoloth Uthgos fhtagn!"

The pentacle begins to fill with mist, then a vague aura is seen. A rustling sound—like dry leaves—is heard and those present feel a shiver of cold air and wispy tendrils brushing against their faces. The probing feelers briefly enter the ears, nose, and mouth of everyone present, leaving behind a salty taste that remains on the tongue.

"Unveil the universe, O Daoloth," shouts Dr. Tarrou above the rustling. "And reveal the realities beyond as thou once did for the astrologers of Atlantis!"

The house is rocked by a violent shaking and the shriek of metal resounds. The rustling sound and the ethereal aura suddenly disappear. The mist is gone and the pentacle empty, save for the two dimly flickering candles.

Dr. Tarrou proceeds to turn the light on. Everyone who witnessed the ritual now sees past the three dimensions and into those beyond. The sight is hideous, the effect maddening. The room no longer exists, replaced by a swirling mass of nebulous adumbrations before which

human senses are unthinkably convulsed. At once, sounds are tasted, flavors viewed, odors heard, and visions smelled. The shapes of those present are no longer recognizable, seen as curvilinear shapes moving in and out of view like phantoms.

Each round spent in these dimensions requires a Sanity roll against a possible loss of 1/1D10 points. No matter in which direction they turn, those present find they are surrounded by the horror of the unveiled universe. The only way to nullify the effect is to rap Dr. Tarrou's metal rod upon the floor several times. If an investigator states specifically that he or she is searching for the metal rod, allow him or her a halved Spot Hidden roll. When the rod is struck several times against the floor, the horrors of the extra-dimensional universe disappear, replaced by the familiar three-dimensional world.

The investigators should interrupt the ceremony before it reaches this point, of course. Two effective but dangerous methods are: switching on the light before Daoloth has gone; and breaking the continuity of the pentacle. In the former case all present witness the terrible form of Daoloth, resulting in a loss of 1D10/1D100 Sanity points. In the latter, Daoloth expands a radius of 8 meters per round until he fills the room. Anyone engulfed by Daoloth is carried off to strange dimensions from which he or she never returns.

Investigators who switch on the light will not be harmed if they cannot see Daoloth—if they wear eye patches, for instance. Simply closing one's eyes might even be sufficient. Investigators who break the continuity of the pentacle must take care not to linger within the room. Indeed, they should be as far away as possible, or risk being engulfed.

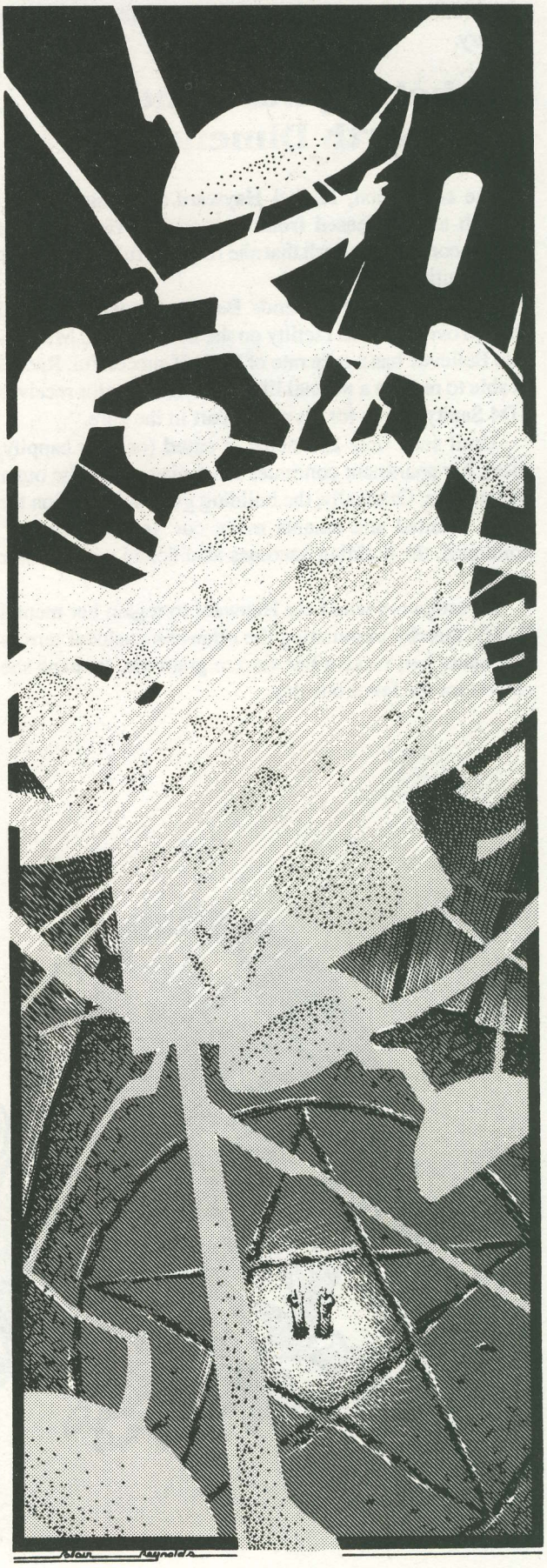
Defeating Dr. Tarrou

Dr. Tarrou poses a serious threat to any who would become his patient. If allowed to continue his unorthodox treatments the barriers between our three-dimensional world and the outer realms erode, permitting the horrors that lurk beyond to infest this world.

If the investigators succeed in destroying his supply of Liao, Dr. Tarrou obtains more from his contacts in Asia, taking several months or longer. No Sanity award is allowed.

If the investigators somehow manage to ruin the doctor's reputation, or put the police onto him, Tarrou moves to another state or even another country, if necessary. No Sanity award is allowed.

Eliminating Dr. Tarrou is the permanent solution. If Dr. Tarrou is dispatched before he invokes Daoloth, the investigators are awarded 1D8 Sanity points each. If Dr. Tarrou is eliminated after Daoloth has been invoked, the investigators are only awarded 1D4 Sanity points. Either way, the investigators must be careful not to leave any



The Terrible Form of Daoloth

clues linking them to a murder or they will face a police inquiry.

Rachel Hayward and the Fourth Dimension

At the conclusion, Rachel Hayward is physically well enough to be released from the hospital. However, her mental condition is such that she requires full-time care in an institution.

Dr. Wingate recommends Bellevue, a well-regarded though overcrowded facility on the East River in Manhattan. Bellevue has a cure rate of 70%. If successful, Rachel is able to resume a normal life. Each investigator receives 1D4 Sanity points for his or her part in the cure.

Until such time as Rachel is cured (or, less happily, dies), her apartment continues to be plagued by the outer dimensions. Gradually, the building gains a reputation for being haunted and tenants move out. If the 'haunting' continues, the building becomes abandoned within a few years.

Investigators who help Hayward to regain her mental health, thereby eliminating the other-dimensional terrors that haunt her, receive her sincere gratitude. Perhaps she can return the favor one day.

Statistics

Rachel Hayward, innocent patient

STR 8	CON 13	SIZ 9	INT 14	POW 11
DEX 13	APP 15	EDU 11	SAN 42	HP 11

Damage Bonus: 0

Weapons: None.

Skills: Accounting 15%, Bargain 35%, Computer Use 35%, Credit Rating 30%, Debate 25%, Library Use 60%, Oratory 20%, Ride 15%.

Dr. Raymond Tarrou, mad psychologist

STR 10	CON 13	SIZ 10	INT 16	POW 15
DEX 13	APP 10	EDU 15	SAN 15	HP 12

Damage Bonus: 0

Weapons: Fist/Punch 30%, 1D3; .38 Special 35%, 1D10.

Skills: Astronomy 15%, Bargain 30%, Chemistry 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Debate 30%, Drive Automobile 30%, English 70%, Fast Talk 40%, First Aid 50%, Library Use 60%, Occult 30%, Pharmacy 70%, Psychoanalysis 40%, Psychology 60%, Treat Disease 25%, Vietnamese 35%.

Spells: Call Daoloth

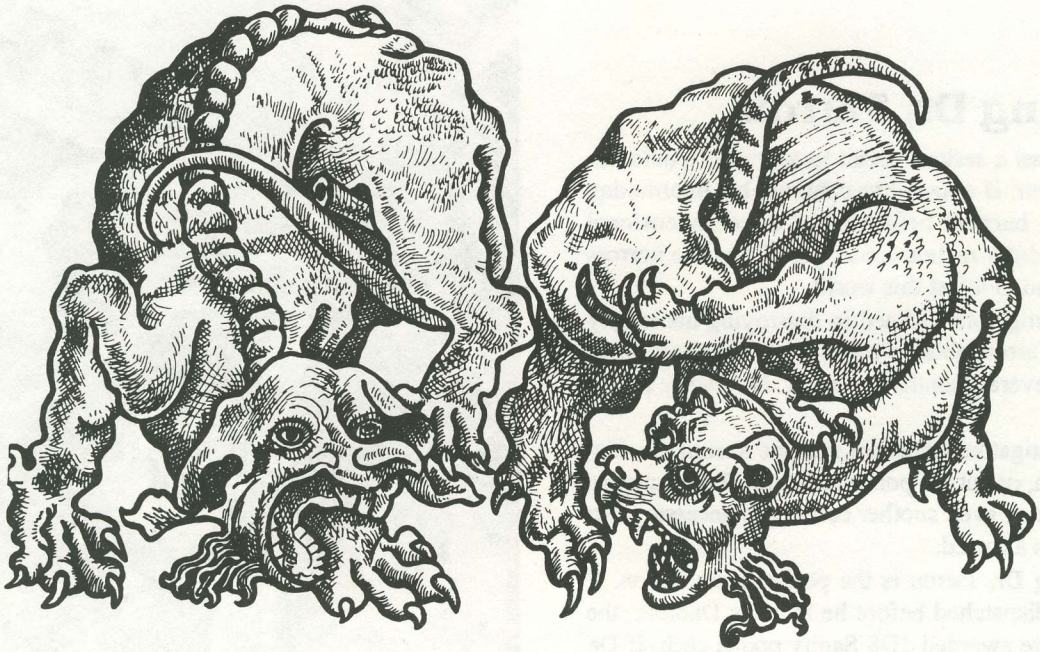
Ngo Dinh Hao, faithful henchman

STR 17	CON 15	SIZ 10	INT 12	POW 13
DEX 15	APP 9	EDU 10	SAN 55	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Bush Knife 55%, 1D6+2+db; Grapple 70%, special.

Skills: Climb 55%, First Aid 40%, French 20%, Hide 80%, Jump 60%, Listen 75%, Sneak 70%, Swim 60%, Throw 50%, Track 50%, Treat Poison 35%. ■



Music of the Spheres

"Though the universe may feign the semblance of fickleness, its soul has always known its masters. The sleep of its masters is but the largest cycle of all life, for as the defiance and forgetfulness of winter is rendered vain by summer, so the defiance and forgetfulness of man, and of those others who have assumed stewardship, shall be cast aside by the reawakened masters."

The Revelations of Glaaki

ALTHOUGH many different investigator types may play this scenario, scientific skills such as Astronomy, Electronics, and Computer Use are especially useful. The adventure is located in the heart of Nebraska and although it can easily be moved to another location of the keeper's choosing, it should be noted that in order for the technology involved to operate correctly some degree of isolation is necessary.

Keeper's Information

Stan Arnold, an old friend of one of the investigators, is presently being held in jail in a small town in Nebraska, accused of murdering his girlfriend, Carrie Osbourne. Arnold is employed as a computer technician at the Great Plains Cruciform Array (GPCA), a radio telescope facility located in an isolated area 45 miles north of the city of North Platte, and near the small town of Hayden. Arnold has admitted to the homicide.

The GPCA has for the past few months been monitoring strange signals emanating from the constellation Boötes. The radio transmissions have been converted to sound by Dr. Gerald Neal, head of the station, the result being a discordant music that is both odd and alien, but still somehow hauntingly beautiful. For a short time the astronomers thought they might have discovered intelligent signals, but study of the emanations proved otherwise. The signals are now believed to be generated by a mysterious dark star, one the astronomers believe might be the fabled Nemesis star.

The object is presently invisible to all earthly optical telescopes. Very dim, its magnitude is in the high 20s. Its distance is calculated at about 14 trillion miles at a right ascension of 14 hours, 38 minutes, and a declination of +27 degrees, 06 minutes. This puts it within the narrowest part of the constellation Boötes, the Herdsman.

Unguessed by anyone, the signals are of cosmic import, and the cause of the murder committed by Stan Arnold.

Nemesis

The Nemesis theory was born in the late 1980s and postulates that a small, very distant star shares our solar system. At its farthest reach, the companion star's orbit takes it 14 trillion miles from the sun. Nemesis completes one orbit every 26-30 million years and the disruptions that result from its near passing are believed responsible for the periodic mass extinctions seen in the geologic record--including the demise of the dinosaurs. The star's passages through the Oort comet cloud creates devastating comet storms which plague our solar system. Comets striking the Earth throw up dense clouds of debris, shutting out the sun's light, in turn killing many life forms. The well-known nuclear winter theory is a by-product of the Nemesis hypothesis.

Ghroth, the Harbinger

The Nemesis star is in fact the Outer God Ghroth, a planet-sized entity of gas, ash, and molten iron. It appears as a vast rust-red sphere, its surface split by faults. Occasionally it opens great eyes formed from the vast seas hidden below its crust. Ghroth is the herald of the Outer Gods, gliding through the universe, singing songs heard only by the pitiless stars and those called the Old Ones.

excerpt from a Mythos tome

"Though the universe may feign the semblance of fickleness, its soul has always known its masters. The sleep of its masters is but the largest cycle of all life, for as the defiance and forgetfulness of winter is rendered vain by summer, so the defiance and forgetfulness of man, and of those others who have assumed stewardship, shall be cast aside by the reawakened masters. When these hibernal times are over, and the time for reawakening is near, the universe itself shall send forth the Harbinger and Maker, Ghroth. Who shall urge the stars and worlds to rightness. Who shall raise the sleeping masters from their burrows and drowned tombs; who shall raise the tombs themselves. Who shall be attentive to those worlds where worshippers presume themselves stewards. Who shall bring those worlds under sway, until all acknowledge their presumption, and bow down."

Ghroth Papers #1

The songs urge the stars to rightness, and awaken the dead Old Ones, freeing them. Ghroth is called the Harbinger and the Maker of the Doom of Worlds.

Due to the entity's distance from Earth, the songs normally have no effect, but discovered by the GPCA, amplified and recorded, they have begun to affect our planet. The earth has begun to sympathetically resonate to the songs sung by Ghroth. The longer the GPCA records these extraterrestrial signals, the stronger the sympathetic vibrations become, eventually bringing about doom, destruction, and madness in final preparation for the return of the Old Ones.

Ghroth is very rarely mentioned in Mythos works. Most Mythos tomes have a chance of only x1 the book's Cthulhu Mythos knowledge of containing information about this entity. The *Necronomicon* definitely makes mention of the entity as does *The Revelations of Glaaki* and the extremely rare *The Outer Ones* (see Ghroth Papers #1.) The entity is referred to as a star or planet which brings doom to the worlds it visits. The death star's passage through space is said to disturb the Seeds of Azathoth, altering their wanderings, and dooming innocent worlds.

The Music of the Spheres

Ghroth's signals have already begun to affect the staff of the GPCA, although Stan Arnold's unpredicted outburst of violence has as yet been the worst result. But all who work at the facility are subject to fits of irritability, depression, lethargy, illness, and other emotional instabilities. None there are the least bit aware of it. After all, the staff has been working extra hard trying to solve the mystery of the dark object they discovered, and worried that someone else will discover it before they can publish a paper about it. Competition in the world of astronomy and astrophysics is intense.

As the GPCA continues to receive Ghroth's radio emissions the effects grow stronger, eventually reaching to nearby Hayden and affecting the citizens of the town as well. It will be the job of the investigators to discover the source of the disturbances and find some way to shut the GPCA down. If they fail to do this, it might be done for them by a band of Mi-Go who appear on the scene, drawn here in response to the Ghroth-induced disturbances. They have reasons of their own for wishing the disturbances stopped.

About Radio Astronomy

This science began in the 1930s and deals with the study of radio emissions from objects in space. Radio waves are a form of electromagnetic radiation, part of the normal spectrum. The radio emissions studied by astronomers are natural ones, caused by the physical processes at work in stars, planets, gas clouds, pulsars, quasars, and distant galaxies. These studies have offered clues about the life and death of stars and clues to the origin, and end, of the universe.

Radio waves are not affected by sunlight so radio astronomers can collect data 24 hours a day. However, storms, aircraft, and even car ignitions can interfere with delicate readings. For this reason radio telescopes are usually located in areas with as few intrusive radio sources as possible. Computer filtering removes other unwanted signals. Radio astronomy is capable of reaching farther into space than traditional optical astronomy.

The high-frequency emissions are collected by radio telescopes--actually dish-shaped antennae--which then feed the data back to a receiver. Although the radio sources do not create sound waves in and of themselves, astronomers can translate them into an audible signal.

Cosmic radio waves detectable by radio telescopes measure anywhere from a few millimeters to 20 meters in length. In order to accurately study such a range of wave sizes, most observing facilities feature multiple telescopes placed far enough apart to create what is called a radio interferometer. Dishes are often mobile, allowing their positions to be changed as needed. When in use, the telescopes are aimed at a certain part of the sky and set to receive a specific range of wavelengths. Signals are received at the different telescopes at slightly different times allowing the astronomers to pinpoint the location of the radio source.

Investigators' Information

The adventure begins when one of the investigators is contacted by the parents of an old friend, Stan Arnold. Arnold, always a gentle man, has been charged with the murder of his live-in girlfriend, Carrie Osbourne. Arnold apparently strangled Osbourne in the course of an argument. He immediately turned himself into the McPherson County Sheriff in Hayden and now sits alone in jail, awaiting trial.

Arnold's parents, Bradford and Tammy Arnold of Chicago, have hired a lawyer to represent Stan. They are now seeking out Stan's friends and acquaintances to stand as character witnesses for their son. At least one of the investigators knows Stan, and is known to his parents as well. Stan might be a former college chum or roommate, drinking buddy, brother-in-law, uncle, cousin, or close family friend.

The investigator remembers Stan Arnold as a thin, very intelligent young man with ambition. A brilliant student, he excelled in both computer technology and electrical engineering. Arnold graduated with honors from the University of Illinois and later attended graduate school at MIT.

After earning his Master's he took a job as a computer technician at the Great Plains Cruciform Array radio observatory and has been employed there ever since. He had known Carrie Osbourne, a graduate student of geology, for almost three years. Arnold is remembered as an easy-going, very even-tempered individual who seldom raised his voice.

Event—Storms

The weather plays an ominous role throughout the adventure. The investigators first arrive in Nebraska in the midst of a heavy thunderstorm with high winds and lightning.

Similar storms occur throughout the scenario; there is a 40% chance every day of a booming thunderstorm that lasts 2D6 hours. The resultant heavy rains reduce Drive skills by 10 to 30 percentiles and limit visibility. The rains may also cause flash-flooding along the Dismal River north of Hayden, the South Loup River to the east, and the North Platte River far to the south.

Running the Adventure

THE scenario begins with the investigators being asked to travel to Nebraska to see if they can't somehow help their friend. Nearing the tiny town of Hayden they are overtaken by a violent thunderstorm, only the first of the Ghroth-induced events they meet with (see *Event--Storms* nearby). They should first want to visit Arnold, then from there search the couple's apartment and visit the Great Plains Cruciform Array where Arnold was employed.

Visiting the GPCA the investigators meet some of the senior members of the staff, and possibly notice some odd behavior on their part. They are given a tour of the large facility and introduced to the workings of the radio telescopes. It is unlikely that anyone will reveal the current secret project that involves most of their time. Gaining this particular bit of knowledge may require several visits to the GPCA facility, making friends with some of the staff, and perhaps successful Astronomy and/or Persuade rolls.

During their stay in Nebraska the investigators experience a number of odd incidents, described in the *Events* boxes found throughout the scenario. These are be staged whenever the keeper deems it best.

Seasoned investigators researching prophecies and precedents in Mythos tomes may discover references to Ghroth (see Ghroth Papers #1) or to the dire portents of the rebirth of the Great Old Ones (Ghroth Papers #2).

The investigators, perhaps suspecting the chaos is the result of the alien object's radio emissions, may try to convince Dr. Neal and his staff to direct their attentions elsewhere. But because the discovery of what might be the Nemesis star is such an important scientific find, the astronomers are very reluctant to stop.

Events Around the World

The keeper should punctuate the strange goings-on in Nebraska with news of similar Ghroth-induced occurrences around the world. Investigators might learn of these events through network television reports or newspaper articles. Three such events are reproduced as player aids found at the end of this scenario (see Ghroth Papers 3, 4, and 5). These include reports of earthquakes in Nebraska and northern Africa, and a severe storm in the South Pacific. Characters making Cthulhu Mythos rolls realize that the African tragedy is located suspiciously close to the supposed site of G'harne, the fabled city of the chthonians.

The South Pacific disturbance seems to occur near the site of R'lyeh, the corpse-city of Great Cthulhu himself! Each of these realizations costs 1/1D3 Sanity points. The keeper is free to create other catastrophic events including forest fires, earthquakes, tidal waves, flash floods, the rising of islands, avalanches, freak storms, plane crashes, murder-sprees, suicides, terrorist bombings, economic declines, and war.

The Fungi from Yuggoth

To complicate matters further, the Fungi arrive on the scene, drawn to the area by the Ghroth-induced disturbances. They have their own reasons for wanting to see the GPCA shut down and the disturbances stopped. Their actions, described near the end of the scenario, may help or hinder the investigators' activities. How and when they act is up to the keeper.

The Climax

Finally, total chaos erupts in central Nebraska as the earth takes up the resounding rhythms of Ghroth's music. The citizens of Hayden are overcome and in their madness turn on one another, destroying most of the town. Caught in the middle of the holocaust, the investigators must escape Hayden, avoid the insidious Mi-Go, and find some way to shut down the radio telescopes, putting an end to the growing insanity. If both the investigators and the Mi-Go fail in the end to stop the GPCA's signal reception, nature itself destroys the facility with a cataclysmic lightning storm.

excerpt from a Mythos tome

"The time would be easy to know, for then mankind would have become as the Great Old Ones, free and wild and beyond good and evil, with laws and morals thrown aside and all men shouting and killing and reveling in joy. Then the liberated Old Ones would teach them new ways to shout and kill and revel and enjoy themselves, and all the earth would flame with a holocaust of ecstasy and freedom."

Ghroth Papers #2

Welcome to Hayden, Nebraska

HAYDEN, the seat of McPherson County, is located along State Route 97 about 45 miles north of North Platte, Nebraska. North Platte itself is located along Interstate 80 at the junction of the North Platte and South Platte Rivers, a city of 25,000 people. This city may be the investigators' only source of such exotic items as special ammunition, computer equipment, national newspapers, or library facilities.

Hayden is a tiny community of about 850 inhabitants. Businesses include the Quick Stop convenience store, the Hayden Haven diner, Murphy's Corner Feeds, the 'Mart (a small mom-and-pop grocery store), and two small bars--Tony's and The Hidey-Hole. The largest non-residential building in town is the brick County Courthouse which also houses the Sheriff's office and the jail.

The residents of Hayden are openly friendly and unassuming. They don't question strangers much and are always usually willing to talk, be it about the weather or the recent murder of Carrie Osbourne—the most exciting thing that's happened here since a fatal car accident last winter.

Wildlife

Later events involve the effects of Ghroth's alien radio signals on Hayden's animal life. The keeper should make passing reference to the abundant grasshoppers that jump and fly from the investigators' every step, as well as the crows and blackbirds seen roosting on telephone lines and in trees. These creatures appear in more sinister form later on (see *Events* sections).

The Music of the Spheres

THE radio transmissions received by the GPCA affect the planet at large through a sort of resonance, the earth's electromagnetic fields changing as they begin to sympathetically resonate to the alien signal focussed and amplified by the astronomers. These changes cause physical disturbances in the planet causing massive earthquakes and drastic climatic shifts. All animal life, including humans, is affected as well.

Ghroth's signals affect the human deep subconscious, those working or living closest to the GPCA facilility are affected first. As the scenario progresses, the area of sympathetic resonance grows, eventually reaching the town of Hayden.

The effects take place during the late afternoon and evening hours, during the time Boötes is above the horizon and the telescopes are trained on the object. To determine exactly who is affected, make a Sanity roll for each character in range of Ghroth's signals. If the roll fails, roll a D20 and consult the table below for the effect, or simply choose an appropriate one.

The effect last for a total of 3D6 hours but can be foreshortened with a successful Psychoanalysis roll. Rolls are made for investigators and non-player characters alike. Effects afflicting non-player characters are noted in their descriptions.

D20	*Effect of Transmission*
1-4	Anger/Rage
5-7	Anxiety/Nervousness
8-10	Depression
11-13	Elation
14-15	Lethargy
16-18	Lust
19-20	Pain

Anger/Rage: Roll D100, subtract the sufferer's POW from the result, then add 10 percentiles for each previous episode of Anger/Rage suffered by this character. 01-65 results in irritable; 66-85 is enraged; 86-95 is murderous; and 96-00 means the character has gone berserk.

Irritable characters are short-tempered, snap at those around them, argue at the slightest opportunity, and say the first thing that comes to mind--regardless of the consequences.

Enraged characters are more argumentative and prone to violence, anything from broken pencils and slammed doors, to thrown furniture and fistfights.

Murderous characters turn violent when provoked, otherwise they are merely enraged, as above. Someone caught tampering with GPCA equipment would certainly qualify as a target for a murderous GPCA staff-member.

Berserk characters exhibit all the above symptoms before exploding into a reckless, murderous, destructive spree of total madness.

Anxiety/Nervousness: Perhaps tinged with paranoia. Everything bad that can happen is happening. The world is doomed and there's nothing to be done about it. The subject is jittery, jumps at shadows, and always fears the worst.

Depression: Those afflicted are gloomy, unable to see the positive. The sufferer may be sullen and uncommunicative, and subsequent episodes may lead to suicide. A character suffering this affliction loses 0/1 Sanity points.

Elation: The character is without a care in the world. He sees problems, accidents, and tragedies as nothing more than minor inconveniences. Cloying optimism and annoying cheerfulness are the hallmarks of this affliction.

Lethargy: The afflicted character is slothful and deprived of energy. He may be late for work, haphazard in his duties, easily distracted and sleepy.

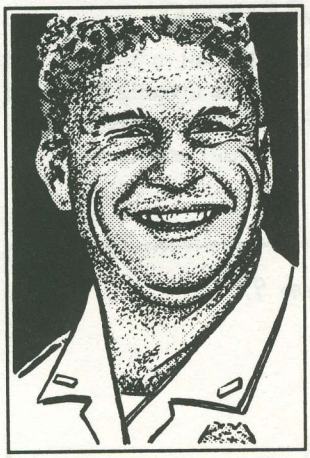
Lust: The character is sexually stimulated. Morals are forgotten as the character flirts shamelessly with almost anyone of the opposite sex. Serious cases lead to assault and rape.

Pain: The character suffers from any number of the following symptoms: painful headaches, aching back or joints, burning eyes, severe heartburn, or other ills resembling flu or hangover symptoms. Reduce DEX and hit points by 1 point for the duration of affliction.

The McPherson County Sheriff's Department

Located in the County Courthouse, the Sheriff's office is always manned by a dispatcher with the sheriff and his two deputies frequently checking in and out during the course of their shifts. If necessary, the Sheriff's office can get assistance from any of the surrounding counties, including large numbers of men and vehicles from North Platte.

At any given time the Sheriff or one of the deputies will be on duty. In the event of an emergency the other officers can be called at their homes in Hayden, usually arriving on the scene in 2D10+2 minutes. The department owns a 4x4 Chevy Blazer, usually driven by Sheriff Kaufman, while the deputies work out of their own pickup trucks. All vehicles are equipped with radios and 12-gauge shotguns.

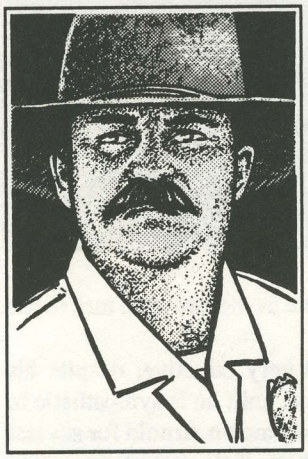


Sheriff Randy Kaufman

Sheriff Randy Kaufman

Kaufman is an athletic man, stoutly built, with short reddish hair and a sunny disposition. Kaufman is married, and lives on a farm just outside Hayden with his wife and two young daughters. He is equally devoted to the law and his family.

The sheriff has had little experience with major crimes. Hayden sees a few fights, drunken drivers, or lost or stolen cattle, but crimes such as robbery are uncommon and murder practically unheard of. While sympathetic to Stan Arnold, Kaufman knows the man murdered Carrie Osbourne and hence must pay the price. If the investigators come to Kaufman for aid, are honest with him, and can clearly explain what is going on, he may be of help.



Deputy Bob Horner

Deputy Bob Horner

Horner is tall, thickset, and grim-looking. He wears a cowboy hat at all times and is seldom seen without a big chaw of tobacco stuffed in his cheek. Horner is gruff, blunt, and although not overly-bright, has a streak of cunning. Divorced, he spends much of his time drinking at the Hidey-Hole.

Horner doesn't like back talk, or strangers who question how he does his job. If he catches the investigators up to something, he hauls them in for questioning. If anyone resists arrest Horner uses his nightstick or firearms as the situation demands.

Deputy Donny Carpenter

Deputy Donny Carpenter

Donny Carpenter is cheerful, youthful, and honest. Recently discharged from the army he has returned to his home town to take the job of deputy sheriff. He is the most worldly member of the department and his stint with the military police gave him valuable experience useful to his work in Hayden.

Donny is the most likely authority to believe fantastic claims made by the investigators. Still, he stops short of doing anything illegal, or which might endanger others. Donny is a potentially useful ally.

The Sheriff's Office

Upon entering, the investigators find the sheriff and Horner engaged in a heated argument over the official department parking space in front of the courthouse. Kaufman claims it is for the use of the sheriff, Horner says it's for whoever is on duty at the time. The arrival of the investi-

Nebraska

This part of North America is wide open, flat, and barren, the arid land used for raising hogs and beef cattle, and for hay farming. Many of the old-time family farms have been bought up and replaced by large, corporate farms, their metal silos seen along the horizon. Towns are few and far between--particularly after leaving the interstate--and they are small communities rarely numbering more than a couple hundred residents. The only businesses are gas stations, grain elevators, tiny eateries, and small markets. Population density is roughly a half-dozen people per square mile.

The scenario is set during the summer months when the Midwestern weather is generally hot, humid, and unpleasant. Temperatures range from the 60s at night to the 80s during the day. Sweltering 90 degree days are not uncommon. Normally there is a 25% chance of rain per day, usually amounting to less than an inch.

It should be noted that a bit of tampering was done with McPherson County, the actual town of Tryon replaced by the fictional Hayden.

Event—Plague of Locusts

As stated earlier, the keeper should have previously mentioned the countless grasshoppers inhabiting the Nebraska roadsides, parking lots, and fields. More than once during the adventure a character should have had to brush a few of the leaping, whirring pests off his clothing.

At some point this profusion of bugs takes a nasty turn. At first a grasshopper or two lands on a character, followed by a few more, then finally swarms, all within the space of a couple rounds. The attack does little physical harm but costs the victim 0/1 Sanity points per round while witnesses lose 0/1 Sanity points but a single time. The victim is plagued by the horde until he drives them off by rolling on the ground, submerging himself in water, or simply smashing them one by one.

gators puts a stop to the dispute as the two men turn to see what the strangers want.

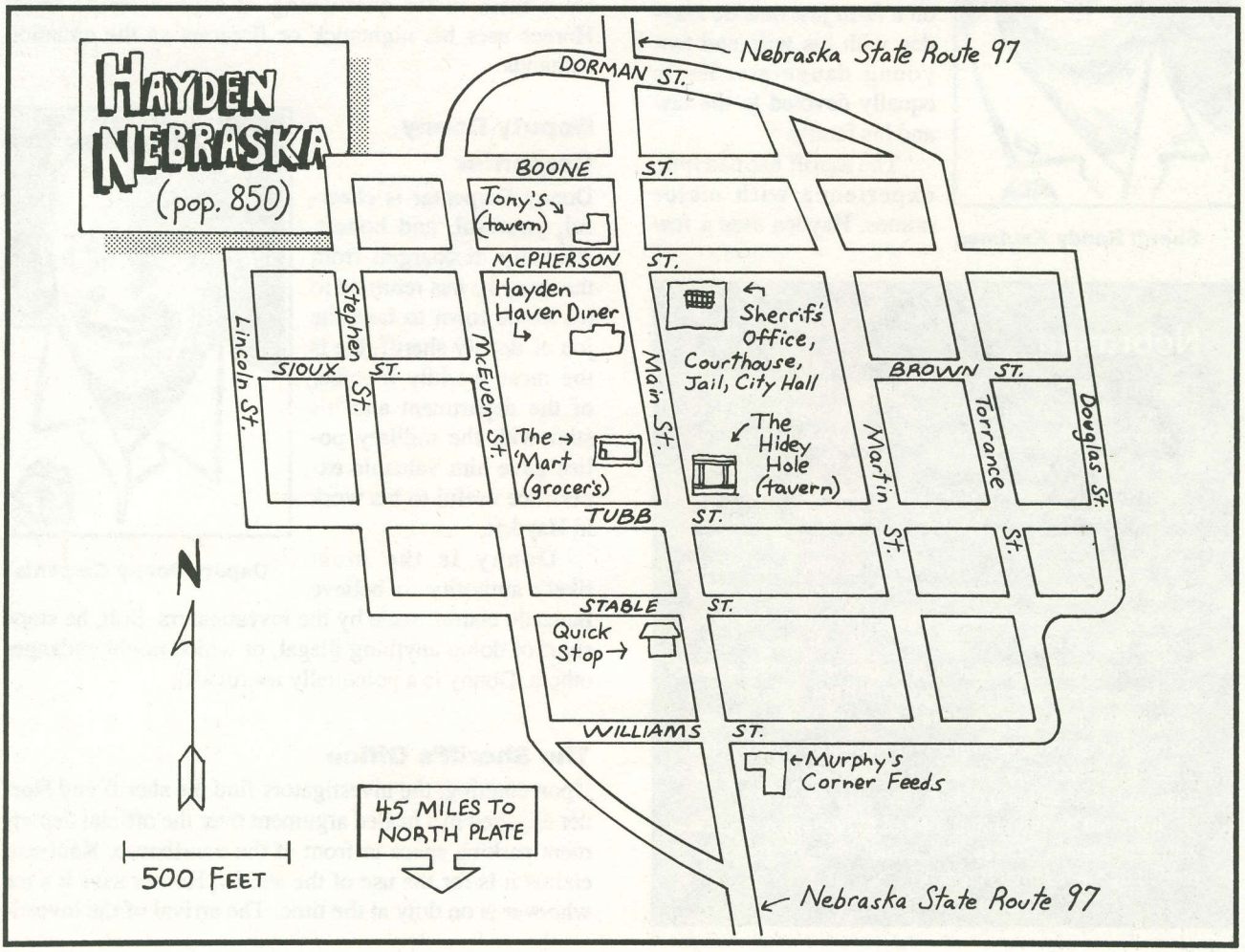
Kaufman is friendly and very talkative; despite his belief in Stan Arnold's obvious guilt he is sympathetic to the young man's plight. He has known Arnold for several years now and always liked him. If the investigators can make a successful Law or Persuade roll, or if they have a letter from Arnold's attorney, Kaufman allows them to see the official police report regarding the murder and arrest.

The report states that Arnold came into the office at 10 PM one Thursday evening claiming to have accidentally killed his girlfriend, Carrie Osbourne. The two had had an argument—Osbourne had dented the fender of Arnold's beloved '74 Mustang—and Stan lost control and killed her. Arnold was distraught, and seemed genuinely remorseful.

Investigating officers found the body of Carrie Osbourne in the apartment and all evidence seemed to verify Arnold's story. Neighbors reported hearing sounds of an argument at the time in question, and no one was seen entering or leaving the apartment save Stan Arnold just before and after the argument.

Visiting Stan Arnold

Arnold is presently being held in the jail in the basement of the courthouse. To gain a visit the investigators must either convince Sheriff Kaufman with a successful Law or Persuade roll, or wait until Saturday and normal visiting hours.

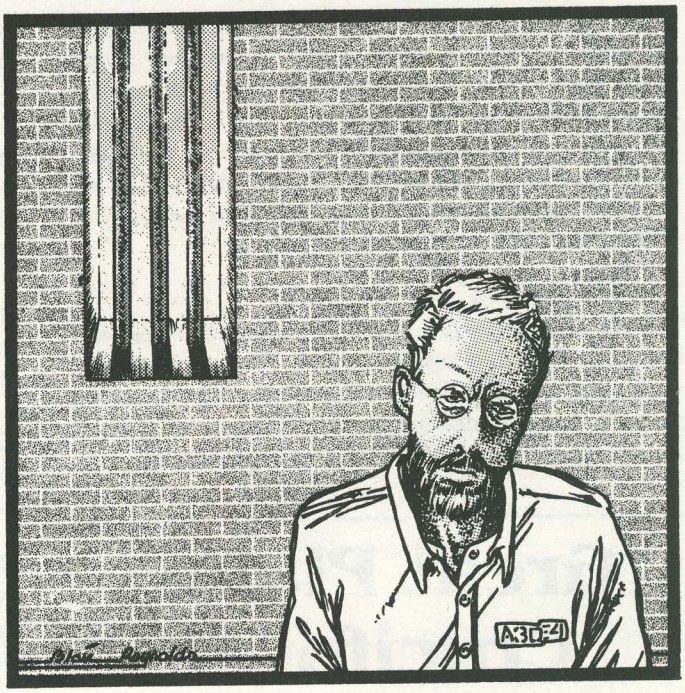


Visitors are searched then shown downstairs where they are allowed to sit in chairs outside the prisoner's barred cell. A deputy always stays within earshot.

Arnold is morose; a successful Psychology roll reveals he is racked with grief and despair. He tearfully tells the friend-investigator all about the silly row that triggered the tragedy. If asked, he claims he was totally sober at the time, and was taking no drugs—at least none that he knew of.

If asked about GPCA he tells them a little about what has been going on lately, about the tension and secretiveness surrounding a recently made discovery. Without going into detail Stan tells them about a mysterious stellar object that was found, the discovery of which has led to tensions at the site, different members of the staff studying different aspects of the object, all conducted under a cloak of secrecy intended to keep the discovery under wraps until an announcement can be made. Competition among astronomers is high and the members of the GPCA staff are no exception. Besides trying to keep the secret from being leaked to the outside world, Stan says there is competition between senior members of the staff for the scientific credit it will eventually bring. Stan exhibits caution himself, declining to go into any specific details of the discovery.

Stan, in his grief, has come to think that someone at the GPCA tried to poison him, put a drug or something in his food or water that made him crazy, and that led to Carrie's death. Competition at the site is so high, he claims, that he wouldn't put it past someone to try to kill off other members of the staff in order to keep the discovery to themselves.



Stan Arnold overcome with grief

If asked about different members of the staff Stan says that Dr. Carl Guest, grad student Jenny Hooper, and computer technician Jack Bernard are the friendliest, though Bernard is rather obnoxious at times. He describes both Chief Astronomer Dr. Gerald Neal and Harlan Bennett, Stan's supervisor, as stuffier and more businesslike. Dr. Diane Mancini he refers to as a verbal barracuda. But he says that any one of them could be the culprit.

A Psychology roll shows that Stan is quite upset, but believes what he says.

Event—Mad Dog

This incident can occur almost anywhere or anytime: in town, at the GPCA, or even on the road.

Whatever the setting, with a successful Spot Hidden or Listen the investigators see or hear a large part-German shepherd mutt trotting toward them, head down, eyes glaring, tail between its legs. With a low growl the slavering dog jumps at a random character and attempts to knock him down. Against a prone target its bite attacks are made at plus 20 percentiles. If it suffers half its hit points in damage it flees.

Those witnessing the unprovoked attack of the mad dog lose 0/1 Sanity points. Those attacked by the dog might fear they have been infected with rabies, losing an additional 0/1 Sanity points for the realization. If the dog was killed or captured testing shows that it is uninfected. Otherwise the bitten character will have to decide whether or not to travel to North Platte and begin undergoing the long and painful series of abdominal injections necessary to thwart the disease.

Mad Dog

STR 9	CON 13	SIZ 8	INT 4	POW 7
DEX 12	HP 11	Move 10		

Weapons: Bite 40%, 1D6

Skills: Jump 60%, Listen 75%, Spot Hidden 65%, Track 70%.

The Apartment

STAN and Carrie's apartment--the scene of the murder--is located on Boone St. two blocks west of Main. The place has been sealed and Sheriff Kaufman's permission is required for legal entry (Law or Persuade roll). Kaufman says they found nothing out of the ordinary, no weapons or drugs. Investigators breaking into the apartment risk discovery and arrest (a Luck roll indicates they have avoided the neighbors' notice).

In any case, the couple's apartment holds no clues. It is left exactly as it was the night of the murder, with a

couple of pillows fallen from a couch being the only items out of place. A taped outline on the floor shows where police discovered Carrie Osbourne's body. There are a number of books dealing with astronomy, computers, electrical engineering, and midwestern geology--nothing out of the ordinary. A framed photograph shows Stan and Carrie standing next to each other beneath one of the GPCA's radio telescopes.

The Neighbors

The couple's neighbors seemed to have liked Stan and Carrie, and say they seemed in love. They never argued, were quiet, and kept to themselves. One of them heard the shouting that preceded the murder that night but thought little of it until the sheriff showed up on the scene.

Great Plains Cruciform Array

THE GPCA radio telescope facility is located four miles due west of Hayden, reached by a gravel road. Nearing the facility visitors see a set of rails stretching across the flat plain. Large, moveable radio dishes are mounted on these rails while other, still-larger dishes are permanently stationed nearby. The entire array is nearly five miles long from east to west, two miles north to south. At the junction of the cruciform is a small cluster of buildings including a four-story tower topped by a gigantic dish 165 feet in diameter.

Daily Operations

Most of the GPCA's operations are run by computers including positioning the dishes, collecting data, and switching dishes between different projects. At most only a technician or two is needed to monitor the entire array. When a problem arises which the computer can't solve an alarm sounds in the control room. Such problems usually include dishes getting stuck on the rails, disconnected dishes, and aiming difficulties. Manual corrections must then be made.

During any given week the GPCA's telescopes work round the clock on as many as a dozen different projects, many of them SETI-related. The GPCA has yet to receive an intelligent radio transmission. The remainder of the GPCA's time is spent in more typical research.

Data collected by the telescopes is stored in the computer for later study, Drs. Neal, Guest, and Mancini going over it at their convenience. In the many cases where the GPCA is doing studies for other universities or observatories the data is sent to the sponsoring group via modem, fax, or mail.

The GPCA also allows visiting scientists from other organizations to oversee or set up their own projects. At any given time there is a 20% chance of such a visitor; they will have skills similar to Dr. Guest or Dr. Mancini. Visitors are usually housed in the staff quarters on the site.

The GPCA staff consists of a handful of permanent scientists and technicians, along with another 15-20 computer technicians, electrical engineers, grad students, clerical and maintenance workers.

The senior staff members all maintain homes away from the facility, some in Hayden, others as far away as North Platte. Some of the computer technicians and grad students reside in the staff quarters.

Administration Building

Besides administration, this one-story cinder-block building houses offices for the permanent staff and a small conference room. A handful of cars occupy the snow-fenced parking lot.

Inside the front door is the receptionist's desk, manned by fortyish Miss Nora Kelly. Although she prefers appointments, a Persuade roll convinces her to contact Dr. Gerald Neal or Dr. Carl Guest. Other personnel

Public Knowledge

The following may be known to any investigator with the Astronomy skill. One successful roll is required to remember the information found in each paragraph. If and when a roll is missed, no further rolls are allowed.

The GPCA was built in the early 1970s funded in part by the National Science Foundation and NASA. Significant funding came from various SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) organizations with one particularly large donation from the reclusive and eccentric American billionaire Perry Brendan, a man whose fascination with extraterrestrials is frequent tabloid fare. Besides conducting its own observation programs, the facility is made available to visiting astronomers and astrophysicists who book time on the telescope to research their own projects.

Dr. Neal and his staff are frequent contributors to *Scientific American, Sky and Telescope, The Annual Review of Astronomy and Astrophysics, Science, New Science Quarterly,* and other scientific periodicals. Their work is highly respected, all the more so because of the relatively small size of the facility.

The facility's staff was initially small, a handful of technicians headed by well-known astronomer Dr. Gerald Neal. But Neal's reputation and the GPCA's early successes soon led to expansion of both its equipment and staff. Senior personnel now includes astronomer Dr. Carl Guest, a ten-year member; Dr. Diane Mancini, a visiting astrophysicist with a one-year fellowship; and Harlan Bennett, head computer engineer with four years' time at the complex.

currently in their offices include Dr. Diane Mancini and chief computer engineer Harlan Bennett (see *Senior Personnel* nearby). Each office contains a desk, computer terminal, telephone, file cabinet, and numerous books on astronomy, physics, computer technology, and electronics. Nothing out of the ordinary is found anywhere in the building.

Staff Quarters

This long, single-story building looks very much like a small motel. Each suite consists of a living room, kitchen/dining area, bathroom, and bedroom. Personal computers connected to the GPCA's mainframe are common furnishings. The quarters are small and unfriendly, lacking in warmth. Senior staff members generally opt to live off-site leaving this facility for junior staff members or visitors. Current residents include Jenny Hooper, Jack Bernard, and a half-dozen or so technicians.

The Tower

This four-story structure is topped by a 165-foot radio telescope dish known to the staff as "the Salad Bowl."

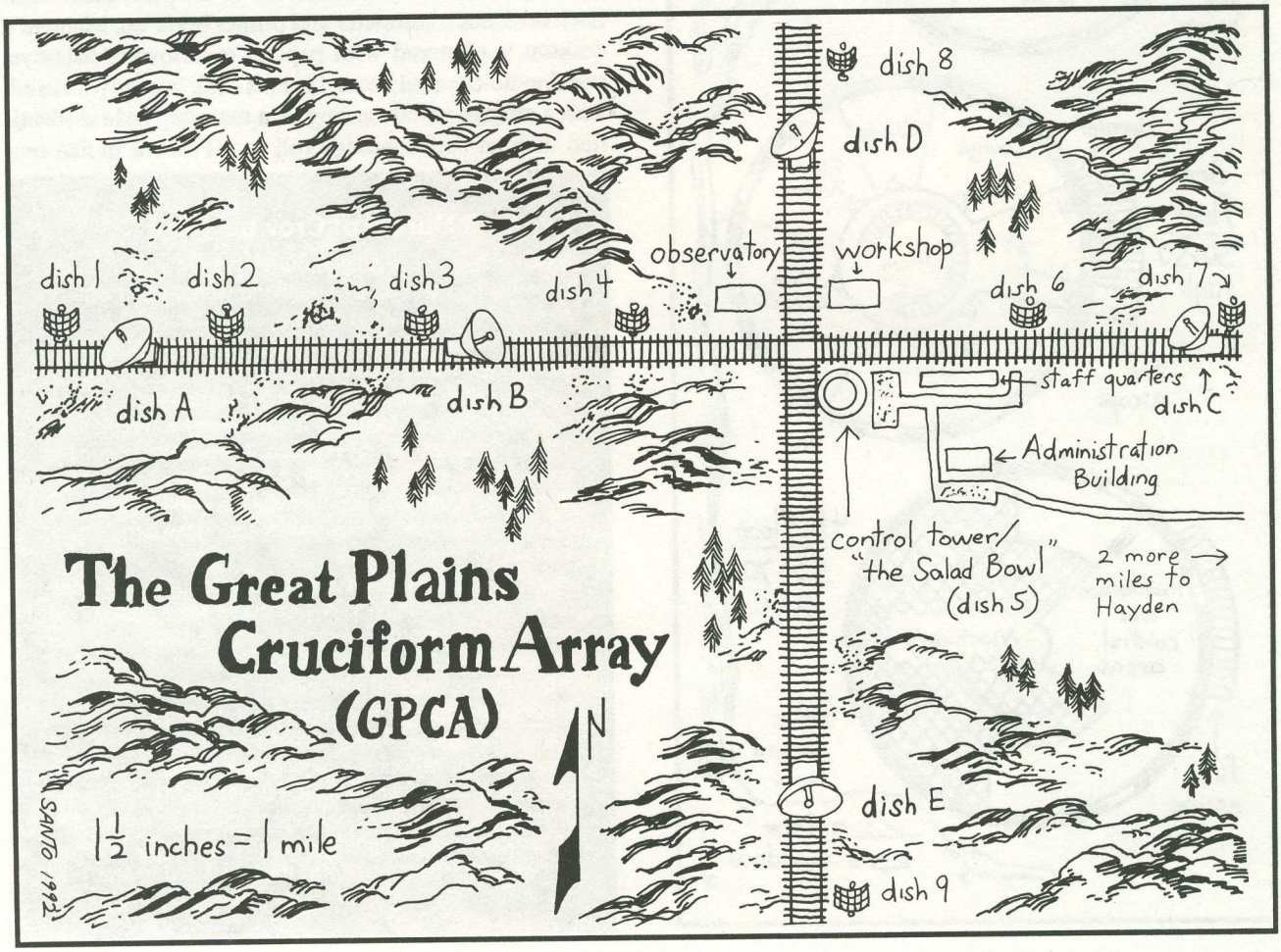
GROUND FLOOR: Two spacious lounges are stocked with current magazines, newspapers, and videos. Each has its own TV, VCR, and vending machines. Prints by Dali and Escher decorate the walls. Rest rooms are nearby as well as a closet stocked with supplies. A small computer lab is outfitted with four terminals and two printers, all tied into the GPCA's centralmainframe. The library contains hundreds of scientific works spanning the

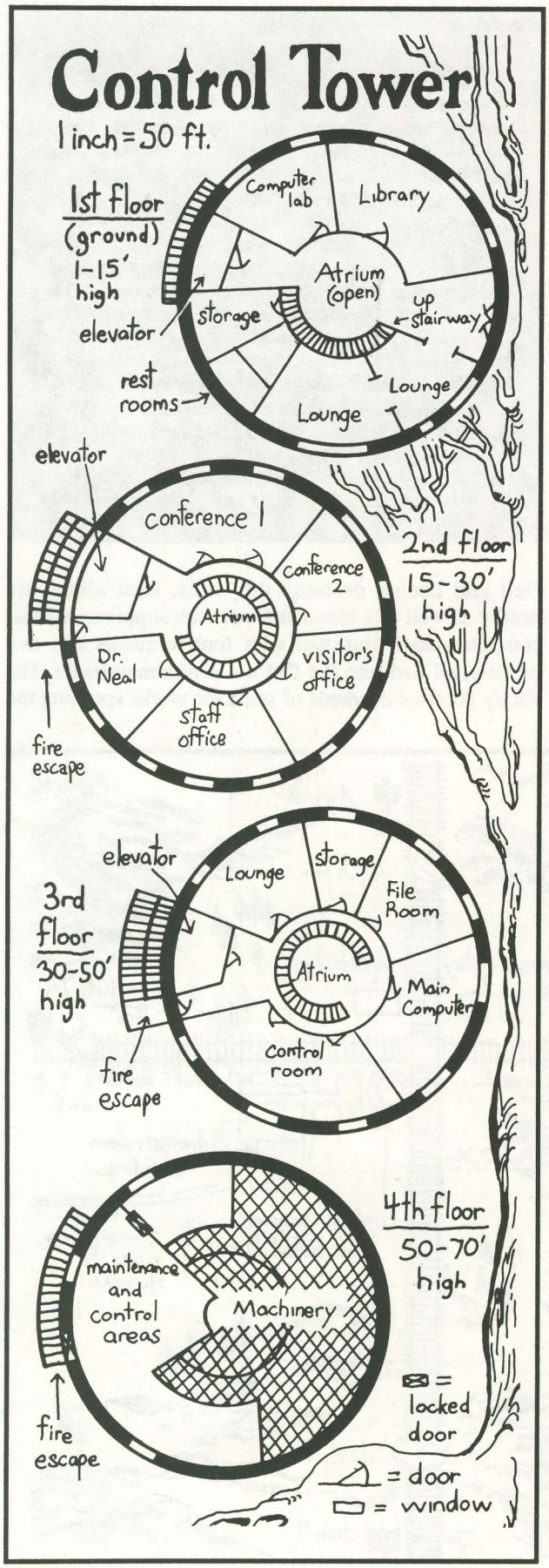
Event—Earthquake

The resonance set up by Ghroth's signals stresses the planet's natural faults causing earthquakes worldwide--even in the normally quake-free Midwest. At least once or twice during the adventure a trembler shakes and rattles the whole area, noticeable as far away as North Platte.

Roll a D6 to determine the severity of the quake. On a roll of 1-3 the quake is a minor one, rattling dishes and windows but causing no damage. A 4-5 indicates a stronger quake that knocks small items off shelves and desks. On a roll of 6 the quake is strong enough to break windows and knock over larger items. Characters failing to roll under their DEX x5 on D100 stumble and fall.

Anyone making connections between the worldwide seismic and meteorological disturbances and those in Nebraska may be dismayed enough to lose 0/1 Sanity points, especially if a successful Geology roll realizes the extreme unlikelihood of earthquakes in Nebraska.





range from hard theory, to mainstream books by Stephen Jay Gould, Stephen Hawkings, and Carl Sagan. There is also a considerable amount of fiction, represented by such authors as Arthur C. Clarke, William Gibson, Isaac Asimov, and J.G. Ballard, as well as books by Stephen King, Tony Hillerman, and Tom Clancy.

An elevator and a winding metal staircase in the atrium give access to the upper floors, as does the exterior fire escape that curves around the tower.

THE SECOND FLOOR: This floor is given over to offices and conference rooms. The larger of the two conference rooms is furnished with a huge table, numerous chairs, a blackboard, podium, slide projector, and a TV with a VCR hook-up; capacity is thirty people. The smaller conference room has only a small table with a dozen chairs, and no audio-visual equipment. The visitors' office is used by non-staff astronomers visiting the facility. It contains three battered desks furnished with computer terminals, a shared printer, and several locked file cabinets. The files contain hundreds of documents pertaining to long-term projects funded by the National Science Foundation, NASA, and several SETI groups. Investigators could spend weeks poring over these files but there is nothing here pertinent to the adventure.

The staff office holds three desks used by Drs. Guest and Mancini, and other members of the permanent staff. Each desk has a computer and printer hook-up. Mancini's desktop is cluttered with papers, overflowing ashtrays, and doodle-covered notes. Guest's desk is neatly ordered, with a strange wood carving of a man-dog hybrid identified with an Anthropology roll as a Pawnee Indian ren-

Event–A Murder of Crows

Investigators notice a large number of crows and blackbirds landing on nearby telephone wires, radio dishes, rooftops, trees, or along roadways and ditches. A Natural History roll suggests that something is amiss; the two species are natural antagonists.

With little warning the flock--perhaps a hundred birds--rises up suddenly in a squawking wave that descends upon any nearby humans. Those who noticed the gathering might find refuge in a building or car and from there watch the birds hurl themselves vainly, and fatally, against the windows. Anyone witnessing the birds' attack loses 0/1D3 Sanity points.

Those left exposed should make Luck rolls each round the flock attacks. A successful roll indicates the character is left mostly unmolested by the flock. A failure indicates an attack with a D10 roll to indicate the amount of damage suffered: 1-4 indicates 1 point of damage: 5-7, 2 points of damage: 8-9, 3 points of damage: and 10, 4 points of damage. These attacks continue until all the characters have found refuge or are dead, or until the screaming, caterwauling flock is driven off. The birds are driven off if 50 points of damage is inflicted on the flock. All attacks save shotguns, explosives, or other area-effect weapons, cause only half their normal damage.

dering of the supernatural trickster-hero, Coyote. Star maps, radio maps, and computer printouts cover every square inch of wall space. Dr. Neal's private office is similar to the staff office, outfitted with a desk, terminal, and printer. Stacks of printouts and reports pertaining to various GPCA projects clutter his desk. Prominent among these are countless orbit projections, radio maps, and theories concerning the possible Nemesis star discovered by the GPCA.

THE THIRD FLOOR: The lounge is nothing more than a bare room with a table, four chairs, a coffee maker, and a rumpled couch. The storage room contains office supplies, electronic components, and other minor needs. The file room contains printouts, reports, computer illustrations, administrative documents, requests for research time, and other matters concerning all facets of the GPCA's operation including the latest data on the Nemesis star (located only with successful Library Use).

The main computer lab contains all the equipment used to record, decipher, and analyze data collected by the telescope. Numerous terminals, displays, and printers chatter day and night.

Next door, the control room directs the actual movements of the telescope's components, and which wavelengths will be monitored. Most of these processes are pre-programmed, requiring no human hand or eye to initiate. Again, computers flash and printers chatter.

THE ROOF: The uppermost level of the tower is off-limits to visitors, and reached only by the exterior fire escape. Here is found the powerful machinery that moves the monstrous Salad Bowl. This machinery takes up most of the roof. Locked doors lead to maintenance and control rooms.

Workshop

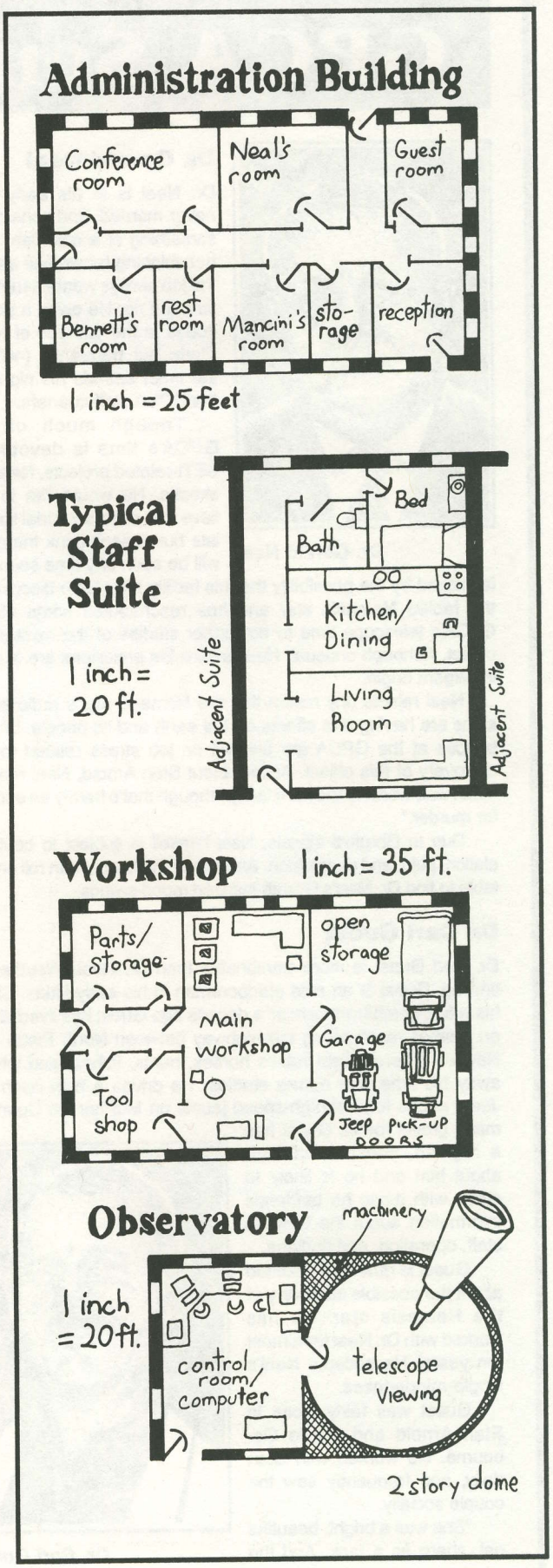
This building stores replacement parts and houses a large workshop with welding gear, tools, etc. The garage contains an old canvas-topped jeep belonging to Gary Wilson, a Chevy pickup, and a heavy truck fitted with a huge winch. The two trucks are cluttered with tools and littered with cigarette butts.

Observatory

This two-story domed building houses the GPCA's single optical telescope, a 24-inch reflector used to make visual verification of phenomena. It is equipped with cameras and remote-controlled from a small room inside the dome. Unfortunately, the Nemesis star's extreme distance prevents any possibility of viewing it with even the largest telescope.

The Receivers

These are the actual radio telescopes, consisting of eight stationary 85-foot dishes (1-8), and five mobile 55-foot dishes (A-E) mounted on rails. All the dishes can be independently aimed in any direction as needed.



GPCA Senior Personnel

Dr. Gerald Neal

Dr. Gerald Neal

Dr. Neal is in his early 50s, never married, and considered something of a cold fish. Neal has thinning brown hair and on the job always wears a rumpled suit and tie. He owns a simple house in the suburbs of North Platte but frequently (40% of the time) spends his nights in the GPCA staff quarters.

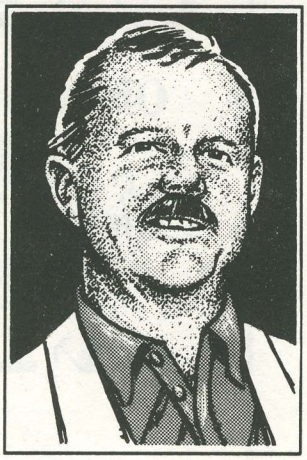
Though much of the GPCA's time is devoted to SETI-related projects, Neal is a skeptic. He would like to believe that extraterrestrial life exists but doesn't think the proof will be seen any time soon. He is excited by the possibility that his facility may have discovered the fabled Nemesis star and has rescheduled some of the GPCA's telescope time to do further studies of the mysterious object. Although unusual, Neal is sure the emissions are of non-intelligent origin.

Neal rejects any notion that the Nemesis star's radio emissions are having dire effects on the earth and its people. Disturbances at the GPCA are blamed on job stress related to the discovery of this object. Asked about Stan Arnold, Neal replies: "Stan was working too hard lately--though that's hardly an excuse for murder."

Due to Ghroth's signals, Neal himself is subject to bouts of elation, pain, and depression. Alternately the keeper can roll on the table to find Dr. Neal's Ghroth-inspired mood-swings.

Dr. Carl Guest

Dr. Carl Guest is more personable than Dr. Neal. Weathered, smiling, Guest is an avid outdoorsman in his early fifties. Since his wife's death from cancer a decade ago Guest has lived alone on a small ranch along the highway between North Platte and Hayden. There Guest raises horses, hunts, fishes, and whiles away his time with nature studies. He drives a new open-top Jeep, and is fond of high-speed jaunts on McPherson County's many gravel roads. Guest has a roguish, conspiratorial air about him and he is likely to share with those he befriends information about the GPCA's staff, operation, and findings.



Dr. Carl Guest

Guest is guardedly excited about the possible discovery of the Nemesis star. He has worked with Dr. Neal for almost ten years. He accepts Neal's single-mindedness.

Guest was fairly close to Stan Arnold and Carrie Osbourne. He worked with Stan daily, and frequently saw the couple socially.

"She was a bright, beautiful gal, sharp as a tack. And the two were really close. They weren't just in love—they were friends. I just can't figure Stan killing her. It doesn't make any sense. He's a quiet guy. This is the last thing I'd have expected from him."

As for wild claims about the Nemesis star's harmful effects, Guest listens, but it takes a successful Persuade roll to convince him. Even then his influence with Neal is limited; considerable proof must be produced to convince the elder scientist. Regardless, Guest is a valuable ally.

Jenny Hooper

Guest is not seriously affected by Ghroth's signals. The keeper should roll on the *Music of the Spheres* table, but the effects should be fairly subtle. Guest is not prone to violence.

Jenny Hooper

Jenny is a serious astronomy student from Connecticut, studying here for the summer. She is pretty, and frequently wears glasses. Prone to gushing about recent astronomical discoveries and theories, she stays immersed in her studies. Uncomfortable socially, she rarely dates and is unlikely to recognize a pass should an investigator make one. Jenny lives in the staff quarters and drives a small, early '80s four-door hatchback.

Jenny enjoys working at the GPCA, even though her employer, Dr. Neal, isn't overly friendly. Dr. Guest is something of a father figure to her. She likes Harlan Bennett and most of the others well enough, but she's rather tired of Jack Bernard constantly hitting on her. She liked Stan Arnold and Carrie Osbourne, and had gone out with the couple a few times for drinks and dinner. She can't believe Stan killed Carrie. He wasn't a violent man, and the two seemed very happy together.

Jenny Hooper might befriend the investigators. She is more likely to open up to them if they treat her as an intelligent woman--and if they don't pressure her for a date.

Due to the effects of Ghroth's signals, Jenny suffers from wild mood-swings including anxiety, depression, elation, and pain. Other effects are possible, as the keeper chooses.

Harlan Bennett

Harlan Bennett is a tall, slim, bespectacled black man in his late 30s. Bennett, a doting family man, lives in North Platte with his wife Judith (a secretary at a law firm) and their 15-year-old daughter, Lisa. Bennett drives a fairly new four-door family sedan.

Bennett is the chief computer programmer and troubleshooter at the GPCA. He implements new systems, updates old ones, and maintains the facility's mainframe. While Neal and the other scientists can program the alignments of the dishes and call up the accumulated data, it is Bennett who writes the programs they use.

Bennett is even-tempered, but often preoccupied, terse with visitors. He hired Stan Arnold out of MIT, and was as surprised as anyone when Arnold murdered his girlfriend. Bennett feels that

Arnold was working too hard on the Nemesis star project and just snapped. As for strange goings-on at the GPCA, Bennett attributes this to everyone working too hard to help prove the Nemesis theory before another facility beats them to it.

Harlan Bennett responds to Ghroth's signals with anger, lethargy, and pain. There may be other effects as well.

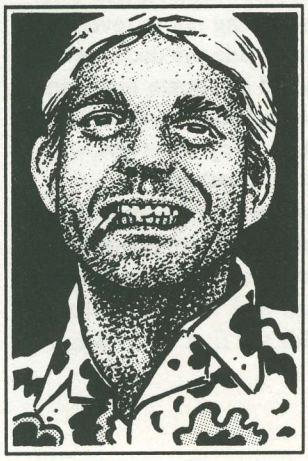
Harlan Bennet

Jack Bernard

Jack Bernard is a rakish man in his early 30s, a lackadaisical computer technician with a monotonous job. Jack is from Chicago where he was used to more social life than he's found in Nebraska. He often goes into Hayden on week nights to have a few beers, and often makes weekend-long pilgrimages to North Platte. He shows up for work Monday morning unshaven, shabbily dressed, and hung over. Jack lives in a slovenly bachelor pad in the GPCA staff quarters.

Despite this, Jack is a competent programmer and technician. Jack took the GPCA job for the experience and the pay, but now wants something a little more challenging—preferably in a "more happening locale."

Jack is friendly with outsiders—they're a welcome change from the hayseed routine. If they're willing, Jack takes them out to various places to eat and drink. Those who accompany him should have a tolerance for spicy food, Jack's cigarette smoke, and copious amounts of alcohol.



Jack Bernard

Jack knew Stan and Carrie fairly well, but says they were pretty much loners. He can't understand why Stan killed Carrie but puts it down to work-related stress. "Hell, anybody'd get a little bats out here in the middle of nowhere, lookin' at a bunch of damn computer screens."

Jack doesn't suffer from the effects of Ghroth's signals very often but when he does it's usually lethargy or lust. As usual, other effects are possible.

Dr. Diane Mancini

Dr. Mancini is a sarcastic, frumpy-looking woman in her mid-40s. She is the rookie among the GPCA staff, having worked here for less than a year on loan from U-C Berkeley. She is overweight and a three-pack-a-day smoker to boot. Mancini is especially short-tempered when it comes to dealing with fools and foolishness. She and Jack Bernard bicker constantly. Dr. Mancini lives in a cluttered apartment in the GPCA staff quarters.

Diane Mancini never married, having decided early on to become a scientist. Her initial studies emphasized nuclear physics, but she has since become interested in astrophysics, hence her assignment to the GPCA. She likes to refer to herself as "a cosmologist." She has taken an interest in the least useful astronomical tool of the facility: the 24-inch optical telescope. She is currently trying to get a visual fix on the mysterious dark object believed to be the Nemesis star.

As for Stan Arnold, Mancini has little good to say. He was a competent technician but not much help in the theoretical astronomy department. He just snapped from working too hard.

"Now if I was Carrie, and that slug came screaming at me for scratching his precious rust-heap, well, I just would have taken out my pistol and asked him which was more important: his car or his manhood? Great conversation pieces, guns."

Heaven help the hapless investigator who babbles to Mancini about alien radio emissions causing earthquakes and tidal waves and insane behavior.

Dr. Diane Mancini

Dr. Mancini is subject to fits of anger, lethargy, and pain.

Gary Wilson

Gary Wilson is a local--a stocky, powerfully-built man in his late 50s, balding, usually unshaven, and quiet. Wilson is the GPCA facility's maintenance chief and also serves as security, running off the occasional trespassing wildlife. He is fairly shy and spends most of his time in the workshop tinkering with various projects: repairing the dishes, searching for replacement parts, building new housings and gadgets, and maintaining the vehicles. He owns the old jeep parked in the facility's garage and keeps a .22-250 varmint-rifle in the back seat. Wilson lives on a farm with his family outside Hayden.

Wilson has learned how to use most of the GPCA's equipment, at least on a rudimentary level. The scientists like him, and trust his ideas when he suggests building new equipment.

Wilson didn't know Stan Arnold well, but thought him a likeable fellow. As for the other staff, Gary thinks they're all fine folks. If the investigators come to him with wild theories about alien radio signals, he won't believe them, and may even warn Dr. Neal about them.

Gary Wilson

Roll on the table to see how Ghroth's music affects Wilson.

Other Personnel

There are others at the GPCA. The keeper should strive to create a living facility with secretaries, janitors, and technicians at work at all hours of the day. If necessary, statistics for these can be derived from those listed: computer technicians using Jack Bernard's skill list, visiting scientists using those of Drs. Guest or Mancini, grad students using Jenny Hooper's, maintenance workers with Gary Wilson's, and so forth.

All character statistics on pages 120–121

A Murder of Crows

Gaining Information

The Nemesis project is top secret and senior staff members will not discuss it. Junior members or visiting astronomers might have learned a little about it and may be more open to investigator inquiries. Psychology rolls reveal that the staff is edgy when discussing current projects.

Computer Use skills might be used to enter the GPCA's computer system but only from within the complex itself--and this requires at least one hour to affect. Unless the investigators have a good idea what they are looking for, Astronomy rolls and several day's time will be required to analyze the reams of data they find on file. With enough time, and enough Luck and Astronomy rolls, they might discover that the GPCA staff are tracking what they think might be the theoretical Nemesis star.

Prying investigators can learn much of the same information by going through the GPCA's written files, although again unless they know what they are looking for this takes a tremendous amount of time. Access to these files is limited so only respected scientists or involved journalists are allowed to see them. Others must use Sneak or Hide, and then hope for the best.

If the investigators appear knowledgeable about the GPCA's studies (successful Astronomy or Fast Talk), a Persuade roll might convince Dr. Neal to let one or more of the party stay on as observers. A journalist or free lance author who has learned about the secret observations can buy his way in on the story by promising not to reveal it until the data is in and the staff has made the decision to publish. An irritable Dr. Neal would of course insist on when and where the story would be released--and on previewing the work before publication. Any observers will be invited to stay in the GPCA's staff quarters.

Dr. Neal may play his Nemesis tapes for the investigators. When the radio emissions of Ghroth are coded into sound waves the result is something like a bizarre mixture of rumbling harmonic bass tones and crooning whale song. Hearing the taped signals for the first time costs a listener 0/1 Sanity points.

The Fungi from Yuggoth

AS if the harmful effects of Ghroth's music weren't enough, a second Mythos menace appears on the scene. A small band of Mi-Go have been attracted to the area by the disturbances. For reasons of their own, the Fungi seek to stop the facility's continued reception of Ghroth's signals. They have no desire to

see the Old Ones awakened at this time and plan to stop the activities of the GPCA in any way they can.

Throughout this adventure the Fungi make repeated attempts to end the reception of Ghroth's signals. Their tactics include sabotaging the telescopes or the facility, convincing the humans that the radio telescopes are responsible for the current spate of worldwide disasters, or possibly destroying the facility altogether. These acts, detailed below, are left to the keeper to use when and how he sees fit.

The shy Fungi stay out of sight as much as possible, preferring to operate by night. The keeper may introduce witnesses to the Fungi's activities if desired. Nearby farmers sight strange, big birds in the night sky, a motel-keeper spots someone lurking about an investigator's car or room, a GPCA technician sees someone moving out near one of the dishes.

Sabotage

The Fungi use odd, fist-sized brown ceramic bombs capable of doing 6D6 points of explosive damage in a three yard radius. If one of these is obtained, a halved Idea roll discovers that the nodule-shaped explosives are activated by rubbing an oddly discolored section. Once activated, the nodule explodes in 15+1D10 seconds. One or two nodules could easily take out any of the telescopes, save the Salad Bowl. But destroying a single dish barely reduces GPCA's capabilities; more than half would have to be knocked out before the facility would be crippled. Destroying the Salad Bowl would greatly reduce the ability to receive Ghroth's signals.

Any such attacks are made after dark, the initial targets being the most isolated dishes—especially the rail-mounted ones. One or two Mi-Go set the explosives while three others armed with weapons stand guard.

Event—The Madman

This event should occur either at or near the GPCA, or possibly on the outskirts of Hayden. Exactly how it occurs is left to the keeper to determine. The madman may be hiding in a ditch and suddenly rush into the road, or he may lurk behind a parked car, or bolt out of a just-opened door, whatever is desired.

The madman--a local farmer--advances on them with a tire iron. He is dirty, drooling, his clothes torn, and his eyes wild. No roll is needed to see that he is deranged.

"Make it stop!" he snarls at the party, raising the weapon. "Make the ground stop singing! Stop it!"

Unless someone soothes him with a successful Psychoanalysis roll he attacks the nearest character. If he gets someone down, he tries to chew off strips of their flesh and drink their blood. Seeing this calls for a Sanity loss of 1/1D3 points.

If incapacitated or captured, the man can be calmed and questioned with Psychoanalysis rolls. He claims to hear music coming from the ground, and that it hurts his head. He is unable to remember his name until the effects wear off in 3D6 hours.

The Madman
STR 13 CON 13 SIZ 14 INT 12 POW 9
DEX 12 APP 11 EDU 13 SAN 36 HP 14
Damage Bonus: +1D4
Weapons: Claws (x2) 60%, 1D3+db; Grapple 45%, special; Kick 40%, 1D6+db; Tire Iron 50%, 1D8+db.
Skills: Dodge 40%, Listen 40%, Rant and Rave 65%.

The Dream

One of the Mi-Go knows the spell *Send Dreams*, and may use it to warn the humans that their studies are endangering the planet. The spell is jointly-powered by all the Mi-Go, boosting it so that more than one investigator is affected. Each sleeping investigator must make a resistance check, his or her POW against the Mi-Go's 17. Success means there is no effect; those who fail suffer the following nightmare.

It is night, and the investigator is awakened by a rumbling sound and the tinkling of broken glass. An Idea roll realizes that a minor earth tremor has just occurred. Rising, the investigator finds that outside nothing seems amiss: the buildings and/or radio telescopes are undamaged. Other investigators or non-player characters may be met, further convincing the dreamer that this is a real world occurrence.

Thunder rumbles in the distance then great black clouds roll in, obscuring the stars. Lightning flashes, but no rain falls. Then the clouds part and an impossibly vast sphere appears in the sky. Witnesses lose (temporarily) 1D10/1D100 Sanity points. Those who have read the *Revelations of Glaaki* or the *Necronomicon* instantly recognize the rust red planet-form of Ghroth--others must make a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll to identify it.

The planet's great sea-eyes slowly ooze open while its surface quivers and splits, revealing red magma-scars beneath. Lightning bristles over its surface then shoots down to strike the ground, obliterating a telescope dish or blasting a car. The ground trembles violently as the thing looms closer and closer. Failing a DEX x1 roll, dreamers are thrown to the ground.

A steady humming, throbbing sound emanates from the planet-thing—a beat echoed by the ground beneath the dreamers. An Idea roll recognizes the rhythm as identical to the Nemesis signals monitored by the GPCA. The throbbing rises to an ear-splitting crescendo then a great bolt of lightning strikes amidst the investigators, bringing darkness. The dream is over.

The next morning those who had the dream remember it all too clearly. Fortunately, as the experience was only a dream the Sanity point loss is only 10% of what was rolled (drop all fractions). Lingering phobias may result, however. Agoraphobia and astrophobia might plague dream-maddened investigators throughout the rest of this adventure.

The Mi-Go descend

The Device

The Fungi may try to leave a clue for the investigators in the form of a strange, metal device left where it will be easily discovered. It is a cylindrical object a foot and a half long and four inches in diameter, made of half-inch thick disks stacked on a rod. The discs are decorated with odd, mathematical symbols and can be rotated independently about the central shaft.

This is the Mi-Go equivalent of a book. To read it, a complex but regular formula is used to turn the discs to certain positions, creating whole sentences and formulae from the engraved symbols. The mathematics are simple--once the five-digit system is grasped--but a Computer Use roll is required to create a program that will eventually decipher how to use the device. The GPCA mainframe will be required.

The cylinder discusses the topic of Ghroth, and its role in the resurrection of the Great Old Ones (see Ghroth Papers #1). Reading the decoded text costs 1D6 Sanity points and adds 6 percentiles to the investigator's Cthulhu Mythos skill.

Parlay

This is the Fungi's last non-violent attempt to stop the GPCA's reception of Ghroth's signals. The Mi-Go attempt to set up a face-to-face meeting between one of their number and an investigator. To do this they leave a note for him or her stating: "Meet me by dish 1 at 2 AM." It is written in a very unusual hand, and unsigned.

If the investigator keeps the appointment, alone or with companions, he finds a lone figure crouched beneath the dish, nearly invisible in the pitch-dark. The thing is cloaked in a heavy overcoat and wears a broad-brimmed hat. It cautions the visitors not to come too close, or to use lights near it.

There is a buzzing timbre to its voice and a Cthulhu Mythos roll suggests it is a Mi-Go (lose 0/1D6 Sanity points). A Spot Hidden roll or a flashlight beam reveals it to be one of the Fungi from Yuggoth. If attacked or approached too closely, the Mi-Go flees.

If left unmolested the creature tells the investigators that they must prevent the radio telescopes from receiving the signals from the Nemesis star. It is these signals and their effects which currently torment the Earth. The Fungi may relate the nature of Ghroth, and mention some recent catastrophes to punctuate its claims.

"Haaev zyou not fehhlt the fvery ehrthh bzelow zyou zsinghing vwizth zthe muzzic ohf zthe zsferesz?" it asks.

Its warnings given, the Mi-Go flies off into the night.

Destruction

If all else fails the Fungi turn destructive. But they wait until the last minute, when the effects of Ghroth's music are already unleashed on the GPCA and nearby Hayden.

The Fungi begin by systematically destroying all of the outlying telescopes. Then they fly to the main compound and continue their demolition. While one or two of the Fungi fly overhead dropping explosives, the others lay down covering fire with their electrical weapons. The Fungi seek to destroy the entire facility and slay all within; they want no survivors leaking their existence to the outside world. To this end they relentlessly pursue anyone fleeing by foot or car. Those who do escape (by making Hide or high-speed Drive rolls) may be sought out at a later date.

Chaos

AT the climax of the adventure the earth itself takes up the alien rhythms of Ghroth. Violent storms erupt, tremors shake the ground, and all within several miles of the GPCA become slaves to their lowest desires.

The worst of the horror occurs at the GPCA and in Hayden. Nearing the town, smoke is seen rising into the sky and a car is seen lying in a ditch. A man and woman are glimpsed fleeing across a distant field while Listen rolls detect gunshots coming from the direction of town.

Reaching Hayden the investigators encounter any number of the following incidents. Undoubtedly after a few encounters they will try to escape the town, but by then they themselves may be affected by Ghroth's music. Any investigator visiting Hayden or the GPCA loses 1D2/2D6 Sanity points.

Hayden Dances to the Music

All Hell is breaking loose in Hayden. In addition to the following suggested encounters, investigators see people and animals running in terror, broken water-mains flooding streets, and hear the sounds of breaking glass, car accidents, and screams.

A Deranged Motorist

At least one insane driver is tearing through Hayden's streets, running down pedestrians and ramming vehicles. This cackling young man drives a brand new four-wheel-drive pickup with blood on its fenders and dents and scratches in its sides. The crazed driver tries to run the investigators down, or ram their vehicle, incapacitating it. Statistics for the mad driver are at the end of this section.

A Rooftop Madman

In the driving rain a naked man climbs to the roof of his house and exalts the stormy sky overhead. Keeper's choice as to whether he eventually jumps to his death, is struck by lightning, or merely sings strange psalms to the heavens.

Earthquakes

One or more minor earthquakes rock the town, as described in the earlier *Events* box.

Lightning

Freak bolts of lightning crackle down blasting buildings, cars, and residents alike. Investigators failing a Luck roll suffer a near-miss and take 1D6 points of damage plus minor burns and 1D6 rounds of unconsciousness. Fumbled rolls indicate more serious strikes, causing 4D6 damage, 1D6 minutes of unconsciousness, and some form of permanent or lasting damage such as deafness, loss of hair, or serious burn scars. Several such bolt-incidents occur during the odyssey through Hayden.

A Murderous Mob

A group of 1D4+1 unarmed lower-class men have tackled and beaten a prominent Hayden citizen and now stand urinating on their downed prey. The thugs flee if threatened with a show of force.

The Afflicted

Several times the investigators come across a man or woman on hands and knees, vomiting. These folk are extremely ill with headaches, fever, and severe nausea.

The Insane

Insane groups and individuals stalk the town gratifying their violent desires. The investigators are bound to come across some of them sooner or later. Up to 1D10 bloodthirsty men and women may be met. The thugs flee if outnumbered, outgunned, or if more than one of their number are killed.

The Victims

The dead, dying, and unconscious are everywhere. Lying on the streets and sidewalks, victims of gunshot wounds and beatings. A man has hung himself from a tree in front

The Weapons of the Fungi

In addition to their explosive devices, the Fungi also carry rifle-like electrical weapons. Appearing as irregularly-shaped pieces of silver driftwood about 18 to 24 inches long adorned with bumps, pits, and exposed wires, these weapons, when fired, emit a crackling bolt of electrical energy up to 50 yards long. If hit, a target must roll his CON against the weapon's power of 2D8. If successful, the character is only stunned--all movement and skills are halved for the next 2D3 rounds. Failing the roll the character is similarly stunned plus suffers damage equal to the 2D8 originally rolled.

Humans attempting to use these devices start at a base chance equal to their INT or DEX, whichever is higher. Each device has 3D10 charges.

of the courthouse while another has fallen through the front window of the 'Mart, held upright by a shard of glass through his stomach. A group of snarling dogs tear at the flesh of a corpse lying in the middle of Main Street.

Rampant Crime

The investigators should witness one or more of the following violent crimes: a resident beating his neighbor with a lead pipe, a man strangling his wife, a gang of boys raping a waitress.

Hot Dog

A group of laughing children aged five to ten years chase a burning dog down the street. They carry charcoal lighter fluid and matches, seeking others to play with.

A Crazed Rifleman

A mad resident armed with a rifle wanders around town, shooting windows, traffic signs, and the occasional citizen. The gunman may disable the investigators' car if the keeper wishes to keep them in Hayden for awhile. See the statistics given at the end of this section for the crazed rifleman.

Vandalism

A lanky youth dances clumsily down the street, singing off-key, punctuating his song with a baseball bat smashed through car and store windows. With a successful Listen roll anyone who has heard the GPCA's tapes of Ghroth's signals recognizes the young man's tuneless song.

Fire

Several homes and businesses are ablaze, smoldering in the heavy rains. Some of the fires are due to lightning strikes, others were deliberately set. Groups of arsonists and pyromaniacs gather to watch the fun.

Destruction

Cars, some ablaze, are left abandoned in the middle of streets, or smashed into storefronts, trees, or telephone poles.

Explosions

At some point the gas pumps at the Quick Stop go up in a fiery explosion that blows out windows and knocks down everyone within a two-block radius. Those within 20 yards of the blast are killed instantly; those within 20-30 yards suffer 2D6 damage; those 30-35 yards damage suffer only 1D6. The explosion might have been caused by a madman turning on the pump and deliberately igniting it, or a luckless motorist might have plowed over the pumps, or the earthquakes might have ruptured the tanks. Whatever the reason, it causes further blazes and traffic blockages.

Rescuing Stan Arnold

The investigators might want to save their imprisoned friend. There are 1D6-1 people left in the Courthouse, each with a 70% chance of having been affected by the music of the spheres. Affected or not, each of these persons has a 25% chance of being armed with a .38 revolver. Combat or Persuade rolls may be required to get past these people.

They find a despondent Stan Arnold in his cell preparing to hang himself with his coveralls. A successful Psychoanalysis roll soothes him long enough for someone to find the keys to the cell. Otherwise he commits suicide within 2D4 rounds of the investigators' arrival costing each witness 1/1D4+1 Sanity points. Investigators searching for the keys get a chance equal to one-fifth their Spot Hidden roll every round. Once freed, Stan is of no real help, but neither does he hinder the investigators. Depending on how it all turns out, the investigators may or may not be charged with helping the prisoner to escape.

If the investigators fail to remember Stan Arnold, he hangs himself. They learn about his death later and lose 1/1D3 Sanity points.

The End of the GPCA?

The same chaos occurs at the GPCA, though on a smaller scale. Storms, lightning, and earthquakes shake the ground while the staff behaves as insanely as the residents of Hayden. Fortunately, the lack of weapons and pyrotechnics prevents them from wreaking as much havoc as the citizens of the town are.

Roll each staff member's Sanity to see which of them are affected.

By the time the investigators reach the GPCA, some staff members may already be dead while others are violent and insane. Again dodging the lightning and the crazies, the investigators must try to find a way to stop reception of the malefic signal. Destroying the dishes is one possibility, or more knowledgeable investigators can use the facility's controls to shut down the radio telescopes. To do this, at least two consecutive Computer Use or Electronics rolls must be made from within the control room in the tower.

The Mi-Go or nature might do the job for them, however. Realizing the severity of the situation, the Fungi from Yuggoth may choose now to destroy the station. They too have to avoid the staff and the lightning but they are determined to put an end to this madness.

With all the lightning slashing through the skies, it is no surprise that the GPCA eventually attracts it. So even if the investigators and the Mi-Go fail to shut down the facility, the storms eventually do. Lightning strikes hit close to the tower giving those sane enough to notice it some warning of approaching doom. Then several bolts hit the Salad Bowl, showering the tower with sparks and flame. Those caught inside the building take 1D6 points of damage per round from electrical shocks, fire, and falling debris.

Ghroth looms closer

Conclusion

THIS is a difficult scenario to complete successfully. Shutting down the GPCA or turning its attentions away from the Nemesis star are not easy tasks. More than likely the radio telescope station and Hayden are destroyed with considerable loss of life. But even such dark endings are not without lingering moments of hope.

If the investigators can convince Dr. Neal that the radio emissions from the Nemesis star are causing catastrophes around the world, he may cease work on that project. Considerable proof must be gathered to convince him. A Persuade roll combined with a stack of disaster reports might do the trick. Successfully turning the GPCA's attention away from Ghroth before chaos erupts is worth a reward of 2D6 Sanity points (although this plan may be disrupted by an insane technician with plans of his own). An additional 1D6 Sanity points should be awarded if the investigators realize the identity and purpose of the cosmic malefactor. If the investigators are wise, they suppress knowledge of the astronomical causes of the worldwide disturbances and warn other radio astronomers to avoid listening for the Nemesis star. Doing so is worth an additional 1D6 Sanity points.

Assuming the worst, that Hayden and the GPCA are beset by disaster, the rewards and penalties increase in number. First of all, each insane Hayden resident the investigators find it necessary to slay costs them 0/1D2 Sanity points. After the holocaust each murderous investigator must also make a Luck roll to avoid having charges brought against them, their crimes witnessed by one of the few Hayden residents who didn't lose their mind. Each citizen the investigators save from their neighbors' insanity grants 1 point of Sanity.

Saving the GPCA from destruction nets each investigator 1D3 Sanity points. If, on the other hand, it is destroyed by the Fungi from Yuggoth, each loses 1D4 Sanity points. Destruction by the storm costs no Sanity points. Each GPCA staff member slain by the investigators calls for a loss of 1D3 Sanity points, regardless of the person's possibly violent intentions. Again, Luck rolls must be made to avoid being charged with a crime. Each of these characters that the investigators manage to save gives them an award of 1 Sanity point.

Finally, each of the Mi-Go slain by the investigators rewards them with a Sanity point. If the Mi-Go were driven off before they could do much damage, each investigator receives an additional 1D3 Sanity points. If, at the end of the scenario, any of the players have nagging thoughts about their investigator having possibly aided the Fungi, assess a penalty of 1D2 Sanity points.

Any investigator spending a fair amount of time at the GPCA learning its operation and goals receives a check to their Astronomy skill.

Though no monetary rewards are forthcoming, the parents of Stan Arnold will be grateful if the investigator helped their son. Simply rescuing Stan from the holocaust brings them an award of 1D6 points. If Stan survives the scenario he stands trial and goes to jail for Carrie Osbourne's murder; parole and time off for good behavior are always possible. Despite the trial's outcome Stan's parents use their influence to reward each helpful investigator with a 1D10 bonus to Credit Rating.

Yet a dark side remains. Ghroth's music affected the entire planet. Who knows what foul things might have been awakened by the songs from the stars and the resultant stirrings of the Earth? What rough Beast might even now be lurching forth toward civilization to celebrate its rebirth?

Handouts and Statistics

THE handouts below are to be distributed to the players as required. The circumstances by which each is acquired are listed below. Note that instead of newspaper articles, the keeper can provide these clues in the form of TV newscasts.

Ghroth Papers #3

This article can either be given out at the beginning of the adventure to help draw the investigators to Nebraska or in the midst of the adventure.

Minor Earth Tremor in Nebraska

ARTHUR COUNTY—Officials at the University of Nebraska have reported that yesterday's minor earth tremor measured less than 2.0 on the Richter scale. The quake is believed to have been centered in the area of Three Mile Lake in Arthur County 40 miles northwest of North Platte. No damages have been reported at this time, though residents were understandably shocked.

"Just kind of unexpected, you know," stated Billy McHenry of nearby Arthur. "The hogs started running back and forth and squealing and all, and the earth shaking, but no harm done. Nothing like you see in California all the time."

Midwestern earth tremors or quakes are rare, but not unknown. Readers may recall that in 1990 scientists predicted that a major earthquake would occur with an epicenter in Missouri. That quake never materialized, but scientists nevertheless say that major earthquakes in the Midwest are a real possibility, though predicting them is impossible.

Hayden gone mad

Ghroth Papers #4

This report should be given out in the midst of the adventure--another symptom of the chaos striking worldwide. The setting is near the city of the chthonians known as G'harne.

Thousands Feared Dead in Ethiopian Quake

ADIS ABEBA—An earthquake believed to have measured nearly 9 points on the Richter scale struck the south central portion of this African nation yesterday morning. Peace Corps volunteers and officials of the Ethiopian government report villages destroyed and countless fatalities.

The earthquake was preceded by a series of small tremors that began about thirteen hours before the major quake rocked Adis Abeba and areas as far away as Nairobi, Djibouti, and southern Egypt. Casualties are reported to be heavy with most losses occurring among the starving peoples of Ethiopia. Severe droughts have afflicted this African nation for over a decade, and worldwide relief efforts have failed to bring needed aid to the famine-stricken Ethiopians.

Nathan Vaughan, head of the American Peace Corps Famine Relief Program in Ethiopia, stated that now more than ever aid is needed for the devastated African nation. "These people were bad off before the earthquake, and now we've got damaged roads so we can't even get the supplies to where they're needed. Things are a hell of a lot worse. I've seen whole villages lying in ruins, hundreds of people dead. We're going to need even more medical supplies and food than before. Christ, this is just a real mess."

Ghroth Papers #4

Ghroth Papers #5

As above, this article should serve as another reminder that the current spate of bizarre events isn't limited to the Midwest. The implication is that the storm-racked area is adjacent to R'lyeh.

South Pacific Stirred by Storms, Earthquakes

EASTER ISLAND—Severe storms and tidal waves have racked the vicinity of Easter Island for the past week. Officials of the Chilean government warn against travelling in the waters west of that country, as an underwater earthquake is believed to have stirred up extremely rough seas throughout that part of the South Pacific.

At least one vessel, the freighter *Yolanda Gray* out of San Francisco, has been lost in these storms. Rescue operations were suspended Monday due to rough waters and high winds, and all hands are feared lost. Captain Paolo Rivas of the Chilean Coast Guard reports that underwater seismic activity is believed to be causing the disturbances in the ocean nearby.

Rescue vessels have reported seeing new islands thrown up from the ocean floor, but these reports are as yet unconfirmed.

Ghroth Papers #5

Sheriff Randy Kaufman, age 36

STR 12	CON 14	SIZ 15	INT 14	POW 13
DEX 13	APP 13	EDU 14	SAN 65	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 60%, 1D3+1D4; Grapple 35%, special; Nightstick 45%, 1D6+1D4; .38 Revolver 65%, 1D10; 12-gauge pump shotgun 75%, 4D6/2D6/1D6.

Skills: Dodge 35%, Drive Automobile 55%, First Aid 40%, Hide 25%, Law 65%, Listen 50%, Persuade 45%, Photography 40%, Psychology 40%, Sneak 30%, Spot Hidden 60%, Track 30%.

Deputy Bob Horner, age 46

STR 13	CON 11	SIZ 16	INT 12	POW 10
DEX 10	APP 9	EDU 12	SAN 50	HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 75%, 1D3+1D4; Grapple 65%, special; Kick 50%, 1D6+1D4; Nightstick 55%, 1D6+1D4; .357 Magnum Revolver 60%, 1D8+1D6; 12-gauge pump shotgun 60%, 4D6/2D6/1D6.

Skills: Dodge 20%, Drive Automobile 55%, Law 55%, Listen 35%, Spot Hidden 40%.

Deputy Donny Carpenter, age 33

STR 14	CON 16	SIZ 15	INT 13	POW 12
DEX 14	APP 15	EDU 16	SAN 60	HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 65%, 1D3+1D4; Grapple 60%, special; Kick 65%, 1D6+1D4; Nightstick 55%, 1D6+1D4; .38 Revolver 50%, 1D10; 12- gauge pump shotgun 45%, 4D6/2D6/1D6.

Skills: Climb 50%, Computer Use 35%, Dodge 45%, Drive Automobile 50%, Hide 40%, Law 50%, Listen 30%, Martial Arts 45%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Psychology 30%, Sneak 30%, Spot Hidden 35%, Throw 55%, Track 25%.

Dr. Gerald Neal, astrophysicist, age 53

STR 10	CON 11	SIZ 14	INT 17	POW 13
DEX 10	APP 11	EDU 22	SAN 59	HP 13

Weapons: None, all at base percentages.

Skills: Accounting 45%, Astronomy 95%, Chemistry 20%, Computer Use 50%, Credit Rating 65%, Electronics 35%, English 95%, German 50%, History 40%, Library Use 60%, Listen 40%, Make Maps 30%, Persuade 65%, Physics 70%, Spot Hidden 40%.

Dr. Carl Guest, astrophysicist, age 51

STR 10	CON 10	SIZ 14	INT 15	POW 14
DEX 9	APP 12	EDU 19	SAN 70	HP 12

Weapons: Double-barrelled 20-gauge shotgun 45%, 2D6/1D6/1D3.

Skills: Anthropology 15%, Astronomy 80%, Chemistry 20%, Computer Use 55%, Credit Rating 50%, Electrical Repair 35%, Electronics 30%, English 95%, Geology 20%, History 50%, Library Use 45%, Listen 35%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Persuade 55%, Photography 40%, Physics 65%, Psychology 35%, Ride 70%, Spot Hidden 45%.

Jenny Hooper, grad student, age 25

STR 9	CON 12	SIZ 11	INT 15	POW 13
DEX 13	APP 14	EDU 18	SAN 65	HP 12

Weapons: None, all at base percentages.

Skills: Astronomy 65%, Chemistry 30%, Computer Use 55%, Dodge 40%, Drive Automobile 35%, English 90%, Geology 35%, History 30%, Library Use 50%, Listen 45%, Persuade 40%, Photography 35%, Physics 50%, Psychology 45%, Ride 45%, Spot Hidden 35%.

Harlan Bennett, chief computer technician, age 38

STR 12	CON 14	SIZ 13	INT 16	POW 12
DEX 13	APP 13	EDU 19	SAN 60	HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: None, all at base percentages.

Skills: Astronomy 35%, Computer Use 80%, Credit Rating 45%, Drive Automobile 40%, Electrical Repair 30%, Electronics 65%, English 95%, Listen 30%, Make Maps 45%, Mechanical Repair 35%, Physics 40%, Spot Hidden 55%.

Jack Bernard, computer technician, age 32

STR 12	CON 12	SIZ 14	INT 14	POW 11
DEX 13	APP 14	EDU 17	SAN 55	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 55%, 1D3+1D4; Grapple 35%, special; Club 45%, 1D6 or 1D8 (as per club size).

Skills: Astronomy 30%, Computer Use 65%, Dodge 35%, Drive Automobile 50%, Electrical Repair 45%, Electronics 50%, Fast Talk 45%, Law 15%, Make Maps 35%, Mechanical Repair 50%, Physics 35%, Sneak 30%.

Dr. Diane Mancini, astrophysicist, age 44

STR 10	CON 11	SIZ 13	INT 16	POW 13
DEX 11	APP 11	EDU 19	SAN 65	HP 12

Damage Bonus: 0

Weapons: Kick 40%, 1D6; .38 revolver 25%, 1D10.

Skills: Astronomy 55%, Botany 15%, Chemistry 40%, Computer Use 35%, English 95%, History 50%, Library Use 65%, Listen 40%, Persuade 65%, Physics 75%, Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 60%.

Gary Wilson, maintenance chief, age 57

STR 13	CON 15	SIZ 15	INT 13	POW 12
DEX 13	APP 12	EDU 13	SAN 60	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 75%, 1D3+1D4; Grapple 60%, special; Club 60%, 1D6 or 1D8 (as per club size); .22-250 bolt-action rifle 60%, 2D6+1.

Skills: Astronomy 15%, Climb 60%, Computer Use 15%, Drive Automobile 50%, Electrical Repair 70%, Electronics 40%, English 65%, Mechanical Repair 80%, Spot Hidden 50%.

The Fungi from Yuggoth

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
STR	10	12	11	17	7
CON	12	13	9	10	8
SIZ	6	12	9	13	9
INT	12	14	15	10	16
POW	14	12	17	15	14
DEX	15	14	18	10	18
HP	9	13	9	12	9
DB	-D4	—	—	+D4	-D4
Claws (x2)	30%	60%	35%	40%	45%
Weapon	—	30%	50%	—	65%

Move: 7/9 flying

Armor: None, but impaling weapons do minimum damage. A pistol doing 1D10+2 damage does only 3 points to a Mi-Go, or 6 on an impaling roll.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6

Victims of the Music

These statistics can be used for any of the above encounters, if needed (#s 4 or 7 can be used as the rifleman, while the mad driver is #2 or #11).

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11
STR	13	15	6	10	10	7	13	16	12	6	11
CON	15	10	16	6	13	7	13	13	13	11	12
SIZ	11	15	12	14	15	9	10	17	13	11	12
INT	13	13	10	10	15	10	13	12	11	13	12
POW	10	16	10	8	8	12	9	7	8	10	9
DEX	10	10	7	13	17	10	15	18	13	11	13
APP	9	7	11	9	10	14	13	11	7	10	16
EDU	10	14	12	9	12	16	14	14	15	13	12
SAN	37	70	41	27	28	43	33	21	27	41	32
HP	13	13	14	10	14	8	12	15	13	11	12
DB	—	+D4	—	—	+D4	-D4	—	+D6	+D4	—	—

Weapons: Fist 60%, 1D3; Grapple 50%, special; (odd-numbered victims above) small Club 40%, 1D6; (even-numbered victims above) large Knife 30%, 1D6; (#s 4 and 7 above) .30-06 bolt action Rifle 60%, 2D6+3.

Skills: Dodge 30%, Spot Hidden 30%; (#s 2 and 11 above) Drive Automobile 55%.

When The Stars Came Right Again

"There had been aeons when other Things ruled on the earth, and They had great cities... They all died vast epochs of time before man came, but there were arts which could revive Them when the stars had come round again to the right positions in the cycle of eternity."[1]

The Call Of Cthulhu

It has long been accepted as axiomatic among those who are dedicated to combatting the chthonic menace that the very arts which summon forth the Ancient Ones are also the arts which banish them. Construction of talismans, compounding of potions, chanting of spells—many are the arcane and, some would say, rather questionable practices we pursue with zealous dedication. For in these times of growing metaphysical crisis, when black-windowed temples are brazenly erected in our city-centers and business districts by ever wealthier and more powerful cults of the Elder Gods, when nearly every morning's bulletin brings to our attention yet another menacing manifestation of Their unleashed power, we know that we cannot afford any longer the luxury of the old-fashioned materialist's dogmatic skepticism. No branch of the eldritch metaphysics can be safely dismissed as mere fantasy or naive myth—what appear at first glance to be the distractive rantings of an unhinged mind have all too often proved to be the truthful & objective utterances of a mind that has seen too much.

Yet there is one such art of whose study & practice nearly every chthonic investigator remains willfully ignorant, and which is quite frequently condemned or subjected to ridicule by those who ought to know better. I am well aware that many rumors—some of them cruel, most of them unfounded—have been whispered about the nature and true intent of my work, but it is my firm conviction that the traditional rationalist scientific community erred dangerously when it consigned the ancient proto-science of astrology to the rubbish-heap of occultist superstition, and that our own unquestioning acceptance of their judgement has seriously impaired our understanding of the phenomena we confront. Many passages in the *Necronomicon* and the *Book of Eibon* that are habitually overlooked by conventional scholarship allude clearly to the importance of astrology in forecasting, analyzing, & potentially even preventing the manifestation in our world of unspeakable alien horrors.

While it is a commonplace among experienced investigators that the Old Ones and their spawn can translate themselves from their dimensions into ours only at certain spatial locations—so-called "gates", whose sites are generally recognizable by the peculiar sense of concentrated malignancy, of spiritual foetor, that emanates therefrom—the temporal component of these inter-dimensional contact-points is all too often neglected. In other words, time is no less important a factor than place in determining the opening & closing of portals between our world and Theirs. Knowing not merely where, but also *when* a chthonic manifestation is due to occur could well spell the difference between sane longevity and brain-destroying death; at the very least, it could significantly reduce the gnawing sense of paranoia that is currently gaining recognition as a leading cause of investigator suicide. It may furthermore be possible to determine through astrological analysis just which entities can be expected to manifest themselves through a given gateway.

The astrological chart I present here in illustration of our thesis is drawn from information given in what is justifiably the most famous of all Cthulhu documents, the "Call of Cthulhu" manuscript, found among the papers of the late Francis Wayland Thurston of Boston. I chose to focus my preliminary investigations on this chart for two

Editor's Note

This lecture, written in 1949, was to be read by its author at the 43rd annual conference of the Friends of the Arcane Sciences, held November 14th of that year in Boston, Massachusetts. The unfortunate disappearance—and presumed death—of the author, Marcus Sevenstens, prevented the lecture from ever being delivered. For more than four decades this valuable and unique work has languished in the files of Sevensten's mentor, Dr. Daimon Hunter III, Ph.D., of Arkham, Massachusetts. The recent death of Dr. Hunter brought to public light this long-forgotten document, here made public for the very first time. Dr. Hunter's complimentary work, regarding the recent discovery of Ubar (Irem) in Arabia--incomplete at the time of his death--is, unfortunately, unavailable for publication. It is our hope that in the near future Dr. Hunter's estate will be settled, and that we will be able to publish his valuable insights and follow-up report.

reasons: First, the ms. is unusually specific in regard to time, date, & place, which are the data required to construct an astrological chart; and secondly, the rising of R'lyeh (and consequent liberation of Cthulhu) is considered to be the most significant—or ominous, in the sense of "being an omen"—event of the Mythos in modern times. And in the course of my research, a further reason became apparent—a reason which, God knows, has fraught my work with a growing sense of urgency & fear.

I refer you now to Fig. #1.

Rising of R'lyeh

THE chart in fig. #1 is drawn for 4:45 PM local time (LST 02.51), Feb. 28, 1925, Long. 126W43, Lat. 47S09. This is the date according to the ms. on which violent storms shook the South Pacific, and an unusual earthquake tremor was felt in New England which stirred the artist Wilcox's first gruesome dreams of the City. The position of R'lyeh is precisely noted in the account of Johansen, the first mate of the Emma. The time of the tremor, however, is given vaguely as "evening" in New England, shortly before Wilcox retired.

These data are sufficient to establish the positions of the planets and the sun and moon, but not to determine the angles. Past experience with the charts both of historical & of geophysical events, and with the charts of earthquakes (of which this is quite a characteristic example), led me to decide that, within the time frame of 6 PM to midnight Eastern Standard Time (3:33 PM to 9:33 PM R'lyeh local time), the most likely time would be 7:45 PM EST, which gives us 4:45 PM at R'lyeh. At this time the astrologically very powerful oppositions of Pluto to Jupiter and of Saturn to Mars were on the angles at R'lyeh, forming what I term a "local event trigger."

The occurrence of these two oppositions together is fairly rare, but also that the range of latitudes within which they both could occupy the angles of a chart is quite narrow. The unusual significance of these points will become apparent when we discuss the remote possibility that the "Call of Cthulhu" ms. could be a forgery by H.P. Lovecraft, that author of fantastic fiction credited with bringing Thurston's manuscript to the attention of the public.

"Twas done then as it had been promis'd aforetime, that He was tak'n by Those Whom He Defy'd, and thrust into ye Neth'rmost Deeps und'r ye Sea, and placed within ye barnacl'd Tower that is said to rise amidst ye great ruin that is ye Sunken City (R'lyeh), and sealed within by ye Elder Sign...[until] ye Cycle returneth, and He shall be freed to embrace ye Earth again and make of it His Kingdom and defy ye Elder Gods anew."[2]

Let us analyze this chart. Not only does the event in question portend the beginning of that awful resurrection so long darkly prophesied, but the chart itself presents an appearance that is most unnerving. Even the naive eye must immediately be struck by the unusual pattern formed by its aspects. True, the components of this pattern are reasonably common, and by themselves no cause for alarm: the equilateral triangle, or "grand trine", that links planets in the three Water signs, Cancer, Scorpio, & Pisces; the so-called "mystic rectangle", formed by two trines, two sextiles, & two oppositions, that links the planets in Capricorn & Taurus with those in Cancer & Scorpio; and the right triangle called a "T-square", formed by an opposition & two squares, that links planets in Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, & Aquarius.

As I say, each of these separate components can be found in a great many charts; many of you in this audience undoubtedly have one or possibly even two of them in your own birth charts. But to find all three of them combined in the manner in which they appear in this chart is exceedingly bizarre—I might even say, almost preternatural. For what is the five-pointed pattern made by the

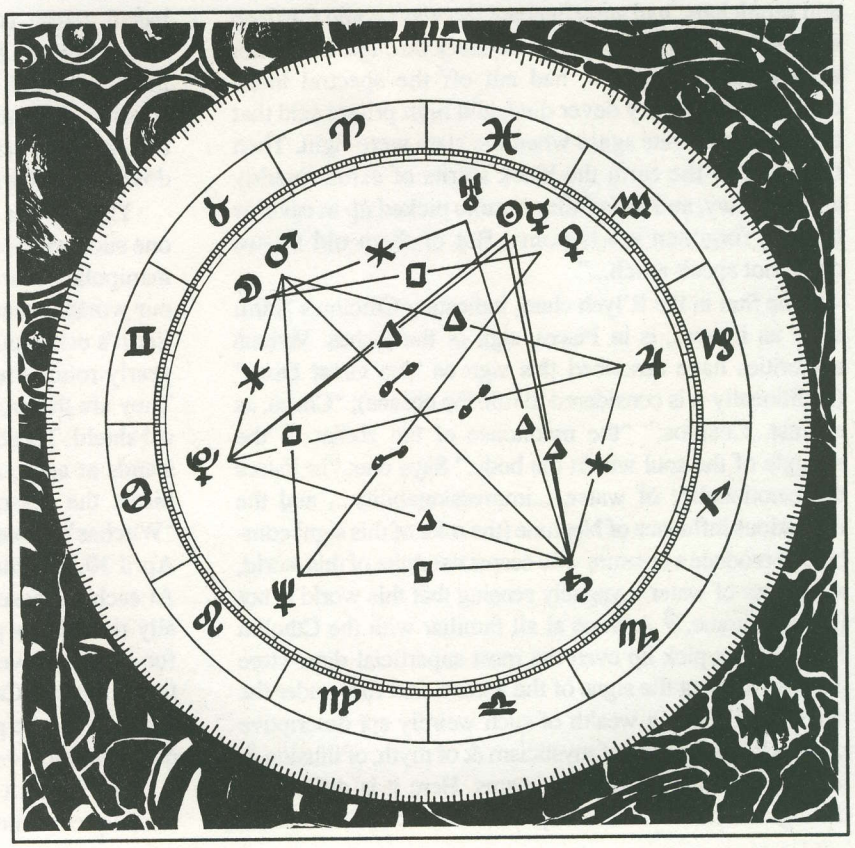


Figure #1

mystic rectangle & the grand trine together if not the figure of an Elder Sign? And how else can we view the T-squared opposition that slashes across it save as a breaking, a cancellation, of the Sign? (Fig. 2 shows this more clearly by omitting the sextiles & squares.) I shudder to point out yet another hideously appropriate symbol of those drowned stone monoliths thrusting upward from their millennial grave: The Earth trine, Capricorn to Taurus, is seen to be arising, as it were, by productive sextiles from the grand Water trine. Earth above Water; R'lyeh above the waves.

The older astrologers would (correctly, I believe) have taken the very strong emphasis on the element Water (as indicated by the Grand Trine between Pluto, Saturn, and the Sun) when the ooze-paved city arises as a straightforward indication of where the "gate" opened: in the sea. Had the trine been in Air, for instance, they would have looked for the "gate" to appear in the atmosphere—perhaps in the vortex of a tornado or the eye of a hurricane. Modern astrologers, accustomed more to a psychological than to a divinatory approach, would see Water as symbolic of that murkiest, least understood level of our world's fourfold make-up: the emotions, the unconscious—the level of dreams. (In astrology, as in ritual magic, Earth corresponds to the physical level, Water to the emotional, Air to the mental, Fire to the spiritual.) The "gate" opens, not into man's body, nor his intellect, nor his philosophy—but into his fears. It is the manifestation of his nightmares.

"In the elder time chosen men had talked with the entombed Old Ones in dreams, but then something had happened. The great stone city R'lyeh, with its monoliths and sepulchers, had sunk beneath the waves; and the deep waters, full of the one primal mystery through which not even thought can pass, had cut off the spectral intercourse. But memory never died, and high priests said that the city would rise again when the stars were right. Then came out of the earth the black spirits of earth, mouldy and shadowy, and full of dim rumors picked up in caverns beneath forgotten sea-bottoms. But of them old Castro dared not speak much..."

The Sun in the R'lyeh chart, indicating Cthulhu's "birth sign" as it were, is in Pisces, sign of the Fishes. Various authorities have described this sign as "the Great Deep" (traditionally it is considered to rule the oceans); "Chaos, as against...Cosmos;" "the madhouse of the zodiac;" "the struggle of the soul within the body." Says one: "In Pisces the emotionality of water, ...impressionability..., and the mysterious influence of Neptune [the ruler of this sign] combine to produce a creature who seems not quite of this world, a 'fish out of water'...vaguely sensing that this world is not [its] true home."[3] Anyone at all familiar with the Cthulhu Mythos may pick up even the most superficial dime-store paperback about the signs of the zodiac, and find under the heading of Pisces a wealth of such weirdly apt descriptive phrases.[4] It is the sign of mysticism & of myth, of illusion & insanity, of omens... and of dreams. Here it is difficult to distinguish fact from fantasy, because the distinction no longer matters; delusion & reality are one. It is considered the quintessential sign of artists, prophets, & magicians—that is, of dreamers, seers, & illusion-weavers. This twelfth & final sign of the zodiac is also the sign of breakdown, dissolution, chaos.

Its ruler, Neptune—a planet named for the ancient sea-god—may be characterized in the same words. This planet together with Venus (the planet of grace, beauty, & aesthetics) in the R'lyeh-rising chart signifies the artists of our world, who saw the city in their dreams. This is the opposition that "cancels" the Elder Sign; could it be that the Deep Ones needed their works, and not the cultists', to resurrect Chaos from its timeless slumber? Was this not the age of Kandinsky, Schoenberg, & van der Rohe—of the breakdown & dissolution of the ancient forms of harmony & symmetry into a confusing pandemonium of cubism, atonality, futurism? Did the experiments performed on the collective psyche by the artistic avant-garde break open the way for the rebirth of ancient terror?

These are, of course, mere speculations; perhaps they are no more than Neptunian fantasies. Perhaps...

"When the stars were right, They could plunge from world to world through the sky; but when the stars were wrong, They could not live."

Perhaps I am wrong to labor deep into the night on an art that many deem accursed, and others judge worthy of nothing more than a derisory sneer. It is unfortunate, but inevitable, that such myopic trivia-mongering flourishes and garners respect in the sheltered ivory-tower world of academia, while work of real practicality and broad-based vision is wilfully neglected and misunderstood. The weird lore handed down to us from darker ages is not mere "artifact", to be collated & indexed by desk-bound scholars; it is an arsenal of psychic weaponry, an arsenal that never corrodes, never obsolesces, never breaks down, except when we ourselves forget its use.

The humble calendar—Man's numbering of days—is one such weapon. Certain features of its construction and manipulation are nearly universal among the peoples of our world, because they derive from the structure of the Earth's orbit round the Sun. Eight days of the 365 in the yearly round are marked by Man with especial concern: They are the cross-ribs that give strength to his calendrical shield. These eight are the four days on which the Sun stands at an equinox or solstice, plus the four days that bisect the seasons. These latter four are the so-called "Witches' sabbats:" Candlemas, Feb. 2; Walpurgis Nacht, April 30; Lammas, Jul. 31; and All Hallows Eve, Oct. 31. At each of these days, one of the four seasons traditionally reached its peak—the several days around Lammas, for example, were generally the hottest of summer, and those around Candlemas the coldest of winter. During these times, the power of the life force reached its strongest expression—and potentially its most dangerous.

Our Western calendar has been shifted somewhat arbitrarily over the years, so that the dates given above no

longer properly correspond to the midpoints of the seasons. Perhaps this is one subconscious reason why we now neglect them—a neglect that may prove suicidal. For it is at these times that, as the ancients put it, "the veils between the worlds are thinnest."

Though we perceive these seasonal midpoints as dates in a calendar year, in reality they are best understood as significant points in the structural dynamics of Earth's orbit. These dynamics are embodied in the form of the zodiac—not the "sidereal" zodiac of star constellations that astronomers (and a few confused astrologers) use, but the "tropical" zodiac of astrology, whose division of the ecliptic into four quarters, twelve signs, and 360 degrees derives from the Earth's orbital maxima & minima at the equinoctes and solstices. The four midpoints are found at the 15th degree of Aquarius (=Candlemas), Taurus (=Walpurgis Nacht), Leo (=Lammas), & Scorpio (=All Hallows).

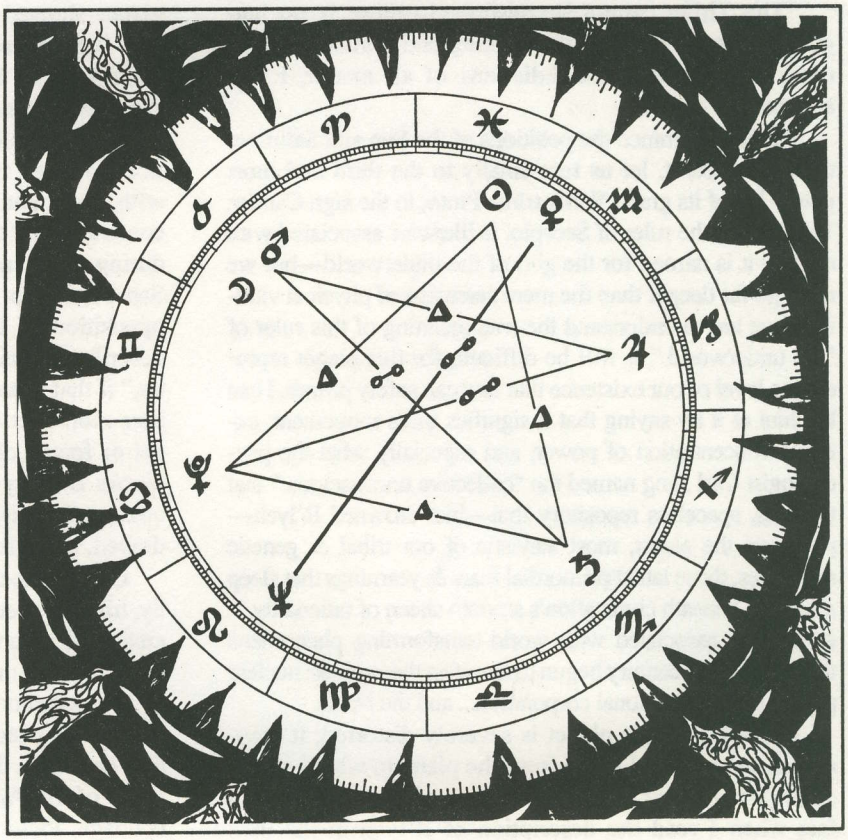


Figure #2

In the astrological tradition, these points are variously termed the Four Pillars, the Four Apostles (with whom they were iconographically associated), and the Four Gates. Each is thought of as a reservoir of the power of the element to which its sign belongs: Air for Aquarius, Earth for Taurus, Fire for Leo, Water for Scorpio. Not only the Sun, but any planet found at or within several degrees of one of these points is like a key unlocking the Gate of that element.

In the chart of R'lyeh rising, we find Mars, the planet of aggression, violence, & will, thrusting open the Gate of Earth, while opposite it under the influence of Saturn, the planet of restriction, decay, & tyranny, the Gate of Water crumbles. These two planets, traditionally known and feared by astrologers as the malefics, are emphasized by their position on the two meridian angles, the midheaven & nadir. Of all possible Gates and their key-bearers, it is black Saturn moving retrograde across the Gate of Water that freezes my heart with fear.[5]

"...For NINIB knows best the ways of the demons that prowl among the shadows, looking for sacrifice. He knows best the territories of the Ancient Ones, the practices of their worshippers, and the locations of the Gates. His realm is the Night of Time."[6]

The Gate of Water (Oct. 31) is the gate of the dead. It is the only Gate to which our culture still does open homage—partly in jest, partly from habit perhaps, but are these the only reasons we still disguise our children as ghosts, skeletons, & witches, and send them out into the night to gather offerings of sweets? Our ancestors knew why: Hallowe'en is the night when the portal between the world of the living & the world of the dead is opened, and the restless spirits of men and other creatures could leave—or enter—our realm. The sign Scorpio, in which this Gate fall, is the ruler of death & decay, as well as of those matters we shroud beneath the epithet "occult." It also signifies our deepest desires & fears.[7]

Saturn crouches maleficently at the midnight angle of the R'lyeh chart—the angle below the Earth, signifying the subject's origins, its roots. To an astrologer, this Saturn could not present a more sinister omen, for it is also retrograde (that is, appearing to move in reverse of the usual orbital direction)[8] and in hard aspect to Mars. Saturn, whose traditional iconographic image is the Grim Reaper, is the planet of contraction, limitation, bondage, control. It is the tyrant of necessity and inescapable fate. It is also the guardian of Time. Justly, it is the most feared of all the archetypes that the astrological planets represent; quite probably it is in large measure the origin of that Christian concept, the Devil. Have I made the character of this planet sufficiently clear? Then you will understand why it is the first planet whose position the investigator versed in astrology will examine when analyzing the chart of a chthonic event. In future I hope to issue certain further studies of charts drawn from the Mythos literature that will abundantly illustrate the key role played by this planet.

"The Thing cannot be described—there is no language for such abysms of shrieking and immemorial lunacy, such eldritch contradictions of all matter, force, and cosmic order."

Having examined the positions of the Sun and Saturn in the R'lyeh chart, let us turn finally to the third and most potent leg of its grand Water trine: Pluto, in the sign Cancer. This planet, the ruler of Scorpio, is likewise associated with death—it is named for the god of the underworld—but we must go far deeper than the mere cessation of physical vitality if we are to understand the true meaning of this ruler of "the underworld." It will be difficult, for this planet represents a level of our existence that few can safely plumb. I can but hint at it by saying that it signifies mass movement, extreme concentration of power, and especially what the psychologist Carl Jung named the "collective unconscious:" that timeless, spaceless repository that—like drowned R'lyeh—preserves the eldest, most atavistic of our tribal & genetic memories, those latent primordial fears & yearnings that sleep restlessly beneath civilization's smooth sheen of rationality. It is strongly associated with world-transforming phenomena that have in this century begun to manifest themselves: nuclear power, the multinational corporation... and the Nazis.

The orbit of this planet is severely distorted; it deviates at an unnatural angle from the plane in which all the other planets orbit. I cannot but think of this astronomical fact when I read the description of R'lyeh in the ms.: "...twisted menace & suspense lurked leeringly in those crazily elusive angles of carven rock where a second glance showed concavity after the first showed convexity." And indeed, the placement of Pluto in the chart for the rebirth of R'lyeh is extremely apt, for it rises in a Water sign at the ascendant, in opposition to magnifying Jupiter. I have found, in other research, a strong correlation between the conjunction or opposition of Jupiter with Pluto and the initiation or completion of massive constructions: the Hoover Dam, for instance, was begun during the conjunction of 1930, and the Golden Gate & San Francisco Bay Bridges were completed during the opposition of 1937. Secondly, the ascendant of a chart describes the outward appearance and surface "personality," if that is an appropriate word, of the subject; a planet here moreover is considered the "lord," that is, the channel or focus, of the chart as a whole. Hence, the "Titan blocks and sky-flung monoliths, all dripping with green ooze and sinister with latent horror"—and the slime-draped, tentacled Thing that waited within their shell.

Cancer, the Crab, is the sign of home & origins, of family, tribe, & ancestry: of that endless ancient stream of generations that nurtures every man & woman's roots. The passage of Pluto through Cancer from the year 1914 through 1939 is commonly associated with the development of Aryanism, that insidious irruption of nationalist & racist emotion on which the Nazi rise to power fed. When the high priest of the Ancient Race was released from his watery bondage, Pluto was making a station in Cancer—a phenomenon, due to Earth's heliocentric orbit, in which a planet appears to stand dead still in the zodiac, and which astrologically is both a "trigger" for events which fall under the rulership of that planet and also an underscoring of that planet's importance in the chart.

"...The Old Ones were, the Old Ones are, and the Old Ones shall be. Not in the spaces we know, but between them, They walk serene and primal, undimensioned, and to us unseen..." [9]

Pluto was not only in the middle of Cancer, it was also on the cusp of the 1st house. In fact, all of the pertinent planets in this Grand Trine / Elder Sign are in the middle of their respective Zodiacal signs, but on the cusp between two houses, i.e. "not in the spaces we know, but between them...!" (See Fig. 3) Venus and Neptune, the components of the "breaking" sign, do not lie on angles and so are in different relation to cusps depending on which house system is used. Using the Porphyry system, they lie directly on the cusps of the 8th and 2nd houses, respectively. Using the Placidus system, these planets are still within 10 degrees of these cusps.[10]

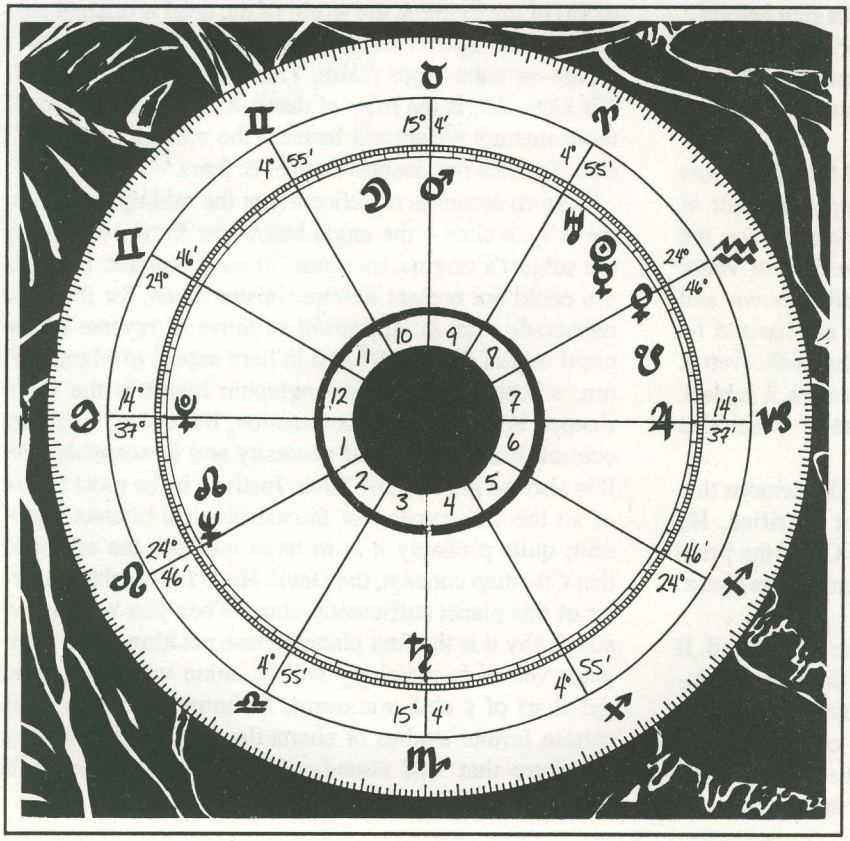


Figure #3

"...when the stars had come round again to the right positions..."

Let us now step back from this chart to ask ourselves again the question that presses forth most urgently from our investigations: How can we predict the opening and closing of such a dimensional gateway? What is the larger planetary cycle that governs these events? In the case of R'lyeh, the astrological picture is fairly straightforward.

Although it is premature to draw general conclusions from this single event, we can identify certain crucial astrological factors in this chart which might be expected to recur in other charts associated with the opening and closing of chthonic "gates."

- ☐ The "cancelled" Elder Sign. The forming up of all the planets into a cancelled-Elder-Sign figure (consisting of a Grand Trine, 3 Oppositions, and another Trine) is the most striking & unusual cycle to be found in this chart. When it recurs—if it recurs—will R'lyeh rise again? Or will some other eldritch bond be sundered, and another "gate" to the Old Ones appear? Perhaps the elemental association of the Grand Trine will indicate the location of the gate (in Earth, Air, Fire, or Water) or the nature of the entity being released. (For this reason, the points of the Grand Trine should be uniformly in a single element, ruling out a so-called "dissociate trine").
- ☐ Component planets on angular cusps. The placement of Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and Pluto on angular cusps, "between the spaces we know," is too remarkable to be ignored. As angular cusps do not change from one house system to another (in almost all systems), this feature may be easily determined with relative certainty.
- ☐ Majority of component planets on house cusps. In this chart, planets are on the cusps of the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 7th, 8th, and 10th Houses.
- ☐ Aspects from the Sun & Moon to Saturn & Pluto. Perhaps the important points to grasp are these: first, it is the cycle of Saturn and Pluto—in combination with the Sun & Moon—that forms the infrastructure of the development and dissolution of this chart, that is the larger cycle we were seeking; and secondly, the gateway of R'lyeh opened under a trine from the Sun to Pluto. The trine is a harmonious, easy, "enabling" relationship between planets. This is a classic astrological pattern; had I designed this chart myself, I could not have done better.

This brings me to a question we are compelled to face openly: Was this chart, in fact, deliberately designed?

"...the casting of horoscopes never having been included among my ambitions..." [11]

Having nearly concluded our analysis of this chart, I must remark once more upon its almost unnatural appropriateness. It has of late become increasingly fashionable in certain circles to question the authenticity of the "Call of Cthulhu" ms. Would-be debunkers are noisily claiming that not only the ms., but the events that it describes, are a hoax, a sheer fictional fabrication cut from whole cloth by Lovecraft in an attempt to show-off his literary abilities. I am confident of the baselessness of this charge, but let me say also this: Suppose the "Call of Cthulhu" were indeed merely the work of a febrile imagination, and the dates & places detailed so carefully therein were nothing but technical ornaments meant to lend an aura of realism to the tale. What, then, would be the odds against Lovecraft's hitting by sheer arbitrary chance upon a date, time-frame, & latitude that correspond to so rare yet so uncannily appropriate a chart pattern as, for instance, the "cancelled Elder Sign" of Fig. 2? I can assure you that those odds are, shall we say, astronomical.

But is it not possible—the skeptic might prate in reply—that Lovecraft intentionally chose, or commissioned an astrologer to choose, the data that would yield such a chart? After all, some five years after the 1928 publication of the ms. in question, Lovecraft wrote the following in a letter to the only significant associate of his who is known to have been an astrologer:

"As for astrology—since I have always been a devotee of the real science of astronomy, which takes all the ground from under the unreal and merely apparent celestial arrangements on which astrological predictions are based, I have had too great a contempt for the art to take much interest in it—except when refuting its puerile claims. Back in 1914 I conducted a heavy newspaper campaign against a local defender of astrology, and in 1926 I read quite a few astrological books (since largely forgotten) in order to ghost- write a thorough and systematic expose' of the fake science for no less notable a client than Houdini."[11]

In spite of his perhaps overzealous protestations against astrology, might he not have been sufficiently interested in it in 1926, the year he allegedly wrote "Call of Cthulhu," to draw these charts and build a story around them? To this I would answer, "Read the rest of the letter." For it continues:

"That comprises the sum of my astrological knowledge—the casting of horoscopes never having been included among my ambitions. If I ever employ any astrological lore in stories, I shall most gratefully call on you for realistic detail."

The last sentence clearly implies that he had not up to that time intentionally made use of astrology in a work of fiction. Merely to construct the chart we have examined this evening from the location and date given in the "story" would require a mastery of astrology, a familiarity with its actual practice, that extends considerably beyond the mere reading of a few books for the purpose of debunking it. Lovecraft informs us that he lacked not only this knowledge, but also the considerably greater astrological expertise required to do the reverse, i.e. generate a location and date from a given or desired chart.

But the most devastating argument against Lovecraft's, or a friend's, possible invention of this chart is quite simple. We have seen in the course of this lecture the all-important role played in this chart by Pluto. In each case, to omit this planet would be to destroy the very pattern of aspects that makes the chart so peculiarly suited to its subject.[12] Pluto is the archetypal chthonic

planet, the god of the underworld; it is the very signature of the deadliest of the Ancient Ones. Yet this nethermost of all the known planets was not discovered until 1930—two years after the publication of "Call of Cthulhu" and four years after its composition. How could even the most skilled astrologer have purposely designed these charts at a time when the zodiacal position of their key component could not possibly have been known?

Oddly, however, we do find references in the Mythos literature to "the dark planet Yuggoth"—occupying, as does Pluto, the orbit next beyond Neptune's—from which our planet, it is said, was first colonized, but which is now inhabited by the crab-like Fungi (reminding us of Pluto in Cancer!).

Some murky awareness of the planet we now call Pluto had evidently seeped down to mankind at some time in the dim past; but whether it was home to the builders of R'lyeh, or to some race yet more ancient, we are left to speculate.

One final question remains to be answered before we close. What is the astrological significance of the cycle on which this chart is based? What is the basic idea—the archetype—that is expressed by Saturn & Pluto together? Ask yourself what was the basic idea that was being expressed in Western Europe in 1914-15 by the trenches and machine guns; in Eastern Europe and America in 1947 by satellite countries and national-security acts? In each of these years, Saturn and Pluto were in conjunction—the most fundamental phase of a planetary cycle, when the idea of the cycle is most purely and potently expressed. I will state it bluntly: The archetype that confronts us here is the consolidation & control (=Saturn) of mass power (=Pluto).

"[The] cult would never die till the stars came round right again, and the secret priests would take great Cthulhu from His tomb to revive His subjects and resume His rule of earth. The time would be easy to know, for then mankind would have become as the Great Old Ones; free and wild and beyond good & evil, with laws & morals thrown aside and all men shouting & killing & revelling in joy. Then the liberated Old Ones would teach them new ways to shout & kill & revel & enjoy themselves, and all the earth would flame with a holocaust of ecstasy & freedom."

I mentioned earlier that I had in the course of this research uncovered a startling historical synchronicity, and that it was because of this discovery that I feel our lives to be in danger. Now, at the conclusion of this paper, I will reveal to you just what this fearful coincidence is that has, strangely, gone hitherto unnoticed by the investigative community. I believe that it demonstrates the truly awful scope and power of the cults that worship the high priest of the great stone City.

In April 1925, Adolf Hitler desired to create an organization whose exclusive loyalty to himself could not be challenged. In that month, he instructed Julius Schreck—an ex-member of the Stosstrupp Adolf Hitler—to form a new bodyguard, and in the month of May 1925 this became known as the Schutzstaffel, subsequently abbreviated SS.

April 1925... less than 2 months after the rising of R'lyeh and the projection of the hideous and terrifying dreams of its master into the fevered minds of the artists of an unsuspecting world. Hitler fancied himself something of an artist, ... and Schreck is the German word for "terror."

Investigators into the outre' and bizarre have always been haunted by the shadow of the legendary "Men in Black." I, too, believe that I have glimpsed them hovering unobtrusively at the edges of my conversations with my advisor and doctoral committee. The Men in Black have always been assumed to be government agents. But I must ask: of whose government? ■

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1 "The Call of Cthulhu" manuscript, published Feb. 1928 in *Weird Tales* magazine by H.P. Lovecraft, the executor of the estate of Francis Wayland Thurston, Esq. This and all subsequent quotations are, unless otherwise noted, from this ms.

2 Necronomicon (Dee edition). Note: This passage is also quoted in H.P. Lovecraft's & A. Derleth's *The Lurker at the Threshold*.

3 Jean-Louis Brau, Helen Weaver, & Allan Edmands, *Larousse Encyclopedia of Astrology*, New York: New American Library, 1947.

4 Even the name of the most prominent star in the constellation Pisces is singularly apt. Fomalhaut—from the Arabic "Fum al Hut" or "Mouth of the Fish"—is described in the *Necronomicon* as the dominion of the Ancient One Cthugha. In the R'lyeh chart it lies at 2 Pisces 44, almost conjunct with the apex of the Elder Sign. "Mouth of the Fish", indeed! Gaping maw would be more appropriate.

5 The Four Elements are recapitulated in the components of the "breaking" sign: Venus (Earth) in Aquarius (Air) opposing Neptune (Water) in Leo (Fire).

6 *Necronomicon*, (Wormius edition), p. 32.

7 Note also that the Sun is in the eighth house, the meaning of which is equivalent to that of the sign Scorpio.

8 Erudite horror-movie fans will no doubt fondly recall the retrograde Saturn in the film, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.

9 *Necronomicon* (Wormius edition), also quoted in H.P. Lovecraft, *The Dunwich Horror and Others*, Arkham House, Seventh Corrected Edition, p. 170.

10 Placidus cusps:

2nd House - 3 Virgo 24, Neptune - 20 Leo 41

8th House - 3 Pisces 24, Venus - 26 Aquarius 18

11 Letter dated Feb. 15, 1933, in H.P. Lovecraft, *Selected Letters IV*, Sauk City, WI: Arkham House, p. 153-4.

12 My advisor points out that the aspects could have been drawn to the ascendant alone, following the practice of many astrologers who treat the angles in the same way as planetary positions. But even if this were the case, it would be an astonishing coincidence that Pluto also happens to have been in that exact same position.

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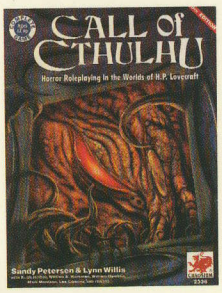

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